

HAND AND BRAIN

abx

Hooper

HAND AND BRAIN: A Symposium of Essays on Socialism

By William Morris, Grant Allen, George Bernard Shaw, Henry S. Salt, Alfred Russel Wallace, and Edward Carpenter



DONE INTO A BOOK BY THE ROYCROFT-
ERS AT THE ROYCROFT SHOP, EAST
AURORA, NEW YORK, U. S. A.
MDCCCXCVIII



Of this edition on Hand-Made Kelmscott paper
but seven hundred twenty copies were printed and
types then distributed. Each book is numbered &
this book is No. 435-

ESSAYS



	PAGE
The Socialist Ideal in Art. William Morris.	9
Re-Occupation of the Land. Alfred Russel Wallace.	25
Socialism and Literature. Henry S. Salt. .	47
Natural Inequality. Grant Allen. . . .	65
The Illusions of Socialism. Bernard Shaw.	87
Transitions to Freedom. Edward Carpenter.	123



THE SOCIALIST IDEAL IN ART

HAND AND BRAIN

THE SOCIALIST IDEAL IN ART.


By WILLIAM MORRIS.



SOME people will, perhaps, not be prepared to hear that Socialism has any ideal of art, for in the first place it is so obviously founded on the necessity for dealing with the bare economy of life that many, and even some Socialists, can see nothing save that economic basis ; and moreover, many who might be disposed to admit the necessity of an economic change in the direction of Socialism, believe quite sincerely that art is fostered by the inequalities of condition which it is the first business of Socialism to do away with, and indeed that it cannot exist without them. Nevertheless, in the teeth of these opinions, I assert first that Socialism is an all-embracing theory of life, and that as it has an ethic and a religion of its own, so also it has an æsthetic : so that to every one who wishes to study Socialism duly, it is necessary to look on it from the æsthetic point of view. And, secondly, I assert that inequality of condition, whatever may have been the case in former ages of the world, has now become incompatible with the existence of a healthy art

But before I go further I must explain that I use the word art in a wider sense than is commonly used amongst us to-day ; for convenience' sake, indeed, I will exclude all appeals to the intellect and emotions that are not addressed to the eye-

HAND AND BRAIN

sight; though, properly speaking, music and all literature that deals with style should be considered as portions of art; but I can exclude from consideration as a possible vehicle of art no production of man which can be looked at. And here at once becomes obvious the sundering of the ways between the Socialist and the commercial view of art. To the Socialist a house, a knife, a cup, a steam engine, or what not, anything, I repeat, that is made by man and has form, must either be a work of art or destructive to art. The Commercialist, on the other hand, divides "manufactured articles" into those which are prepensely works of art, and are offered for sale in the market as such, and those which have no pretence and could have no pretence to artistic qualities. The one side asserts indifference, the other denies it. The Commercialist sees that in the great mass of civilised human labour there is no pretence to art, and thinks that this is natural, inevitable, and on the whole desirable. The Socialist, on the contrary, sees in this obvious lack of art a disease peculiar to modern civilisation and hurtful to humanity; and furthermore believes it to be a disease which can be remedied 

This disease and injury to humanity, also, he thinks is no trifling matter, but a grievous deduction from the happiness of man: for he knows that the all-pervading art of which I have been speaking, and to the possibility of which the Commercialist is blind, is the expression of pleasure in the labour of production; and that, since all persons who are not mere burdens on the community must produce, in some form or another, it follows that

under our present system most honest men must lead unhappy lives, since their work, which is the most important part of their lives, is devoid of pleasure ❧

Or, to put it very bluntly and shortly, under the present state of society happiness is only possible to artists and thieves. It will at once be seen from this statement how necessary it is for Socialists to consider the due relation of art to society; for it is their aim to realise a reasonable, logical, and stable society; and of the two groups above named it must be said that the artists (using the word in its present narrow meaning) are few, and are too busy over their special work (small blame to them) to pay much heed to public matters; and that the thieves (of all classes) form a disturbing element in society.

Now, the Socialist not only sees this disease in the body politic, but also thinks that he knows the cause of it, and consequently can conceive of a remedy; and that all the more because the disease is in the main peculiar, as above-said, to modern civilisation. Art was once the common possession of the whole people; it was the rule in the Middle Ages that the produce of handicraft was beautiful. Doubtless, there were eyesores in the palmy days of mediæval art, but these were caused by destruction of wares, not as now by the making of them: it was the act of war and devastation that grieved the eye of the artist then; the sacked town, the burned village, the deserted fields. Ruin bore on its face the tokens of its essential hideousness; to-day, it is prosperity that is externally ugly.

❧ The story of the Lancashire manufacturer who,

HAND AND BRAIN

coming back from Italy, that sad museum of the nations, rejoiced to see the smoke, with which he was poisoning the beauty of the earth, pouring out of his chimneys, gives us a genuine type of the active rich man of the Commercial Period, degraded into incapacity of even wishing for decent surroundings. In those past days the wounds of war were grievous indeed, but peace would bring back pleasure to men, and the hope of peace was at least conceivable ; but now, peace can no longer help us and has no hope for us ; the prosperity of the country, by whatever "leaps and bounds" it may advance, will but make everything more and more ugly about us ; it will become more a definitely established axiom that the longing for beauty, the interest in history, the intelligence of the whole nation, shall be of no power to stop one rich man from injuring the whole nation to the full extent of his riches, that is, of his privilege of taxing other people ; it will be proved to demonstration, at least to all lovers of beauty and a decent life, that private property is public robbery ☘ Nor, however much we may suffer from this, if we happen to be artists, should we Socialists at least complain of it. For, in fact, the "peace" of Commercialism is not peace, but bitter war, and the ghastly waste of Lancashire and the ever-spreading squalor of London are at least object-lessons to teach us that this is so, that there is war in the land which quells all our efforts to live wholesomely and happily ☘ The necessity of the time, I say, is to feed the commercial war which we are all of us waging in some way or another ; if, while we are doing this, we can manage, some of us,

to adorn our lives with some little pleasure of the eyes, it is well, but it is no necessity, it is a luxury, the lack of which we must endure. Thus, in this matter also does the artificial famine of inequality, felt in so many other ways, impoverish us despite of our riches; and we sit starving amidst our gold, the Midas of the ages.

Let me state bluntly a few facts about the present condition of the arts before I try to lay before my readers the definite Socialist ideal which I conceive for the future. It is necessary to do this because no ideal for the future can be conceived of unless we proceed by way of contrast; it is the desire to escape from the present failure which forces us into what are called "ideals:" in fact, they are mostly attempts by persons of strong hope to embody their discontent with the present.

It will scarcely be denied, I suppose, that at present art is only enjoyed, or indeed thought of, by comparatively a few persons, broadly speaking, by the rich and the parasites that minister to them directly. The poor can only afford to have what art is given to them in charity; which is of the inferior quality inherent in all such gifts—not worth picking up except by starving people.

Now, having eliminated the poor (that is, almost the whole mass of those that make anything that has form, which, as before-said, must either be helpful to life or destructive of it), as not sharing in art from any side, let us see how the rich, who do share in it to a certain extent, get on with it. But poorly, I think, although they are rich. By abstracting themselves from the general life of man that surrounds them, they can get some pleasure

from a few works of art ; whether they be part of the wreckage of times past, or produced by the individual labour, intelligence, and patience of a few men of genius of to-day fighting desperately against all the tendencies of the age. But they can do no more than surround themselves with a little circle of hot-house atmosphere of art hopelessly at odds with the common air of day. A rich man may have a house full of pictures, and beautiful books, and furniture, and so forth ; but as soon as he steps out into the streets he is again in the midst of ugliness to which he must blunt his senses, or be miserable if he really cares about art. Even when he is in the country, amidst the beauty of trees and fields, he cannot prevent some neighbouring land owner making the landscape hideous with utilitarian agriculture ; nay, it is almost certain that his own steward or agent will force him into doing the like on his own lands ; he cannot even rescue his parish church from the hands of the restoring parson. He can go where he likes and do what he likes outside the realm of art, but there he is helpless. Why is this ? Simply because the great mass of effective art, that which pervades all life, must be the result of the harmonious co-operation of neighbours. And a rich man has no neighbours, nothing but rivals and parasites.




OW the outcome of this is that though the educated classes (as we call them) have theoretically some share in art, or might have, as a matter of fact they have very little. Outside the circle of the artists themselves there are very few even of the educated classes who care about art. Art is kept alive by a small


group of artists working in a spirit quite antagonistic to the spirit of the time ; and they also suffer from the lack of co-operation which is an essential lack in the art of our epoch ❧ They are limited, therefore, to the production of a few individualistic works, which are looked upon by almost everybody as curiosities to be examined, and not as pieces of beauty to be enjoyed. Nor have they any position or power of helping the public in general matters of taste (to use a somewhat ugly word). For example, in laying out all the parks and pleasure grounds which have lately been acquired for the public, as far as I know, no artist has been consulted ; whereas they ought to have been laid out by a committee of artists ; and I will venture to say that even a badly chosen committee (and it might easily be well chosen) would have saved the public from most of the disasters which have resulted from handing them over to the tender mercies of the landscape gardener.

This, then, is the position of art in this epoch. It is helpless and crippled amidst the sea of utilitarian brutality. It cannot perform the most necessary functions : it cannot build a decent house, or ornament a book, or lay out a garden, or prevent the ladies of the time from dressing in a way that caricatures the body and degrades it. On the one hand it is cut off from the traditions of the past, on the other from the life of the present. It is the art of a clique and not of the people. The people are too poor to have any share of it.

As an artist I know this, because I can see it. As a Socialist I know that it can never be bettered so long as we are living in that special condition of

HAND AND BRAIN

inequality which is produced by the direct and intimate exploitation of the makers of wares, the workmen, at the hands of those who are not producers in any, even the widest, acceptance of the word 

The first point, therefore, in the Socialist ideal of art is that it should be common to the whole people; and this can only be the case if it comes to be recognised that art should be an integral part of all manufactured wares that have definite form and are intended for any endurance. In other words, instead of looking upon art as a luxury incidental to a certain privileged position, the Socialist claims art as a necessity of human life which society has no right to withhold from any one of the citizens; and he claims also that in order that this claim may be established people shall have every opportunity of taking to the work which each is best fitted for; not only that there may be the least possible waste of human effort, but also that that effort may be exercised pleasantly  For I must here repeat what I have often had to say, that the pleasurable exercise of our energies is at once the source of all art and the cause of all happiness: that is to say, it is the end of life. So that once again the society which does not give a due opportunity to all its members to exercise their energies pleasantly has forgotten the end of life, is not fulfilling its functions, and therefore is a mere tyranny to be resisted at all points.

Furthermore, in the making of wares there should be some of the spirit of the handicraftsman, whether the goods be made by hand, or by a machine that helps the hand, or by one that supercedes it.

Now the essential part of the spirit of the handicraftsman is the instinct for looking at the wares in themselves and their essential use as the object of his work. Their secondary uses, the exigencies of the market, are nothing to him ; it does not matter to him whether the goods he makes are for the use of a slave or a king, his business is to make them as excellent as may be ; if he does otherwise he is making wares for rogues to sell to fools, and he is himself a rogue by reason of his complicity. All this means that he is making the goods for himself ; for his own pleasure in making them and using them. But to do this he requires reciprocity, or else he will be ill-found, except in the goods that he himself makes. His neighbours must make goods in the same spirit that he does ; and each, being a good workman after his kind, will be ready to recognise excellence in the others, or to note defects ; because the primary purpose of the goods, their use in fact, will never be lost sight of. Thus the market of neighbours, the interchange of mutual good services, will be established, and will take the place of the present gambling market, and its bond-slave, the modern factory system. But the working in this fashion, with the unforced and instinctive reciprocity of service, clearly implies the existence of something more than a mere gregarious collection of workmen. It implies the consciousness of the existence of a society of neighbours, that is of equals ; of men who do indeed expect to be made use of by others, but only so far as the services they give are pleasing to themselves ; so far as they are services the performance of which is necessary to

HAND AND BRAIN

their own well-being and happiness. Now, as on the one hand I know that no worthy popular act can grow out of any other soil than this of freedom and mutual respect, so on the other I feel sure both that this opportunity will be given to art and also that it will avail itself of it, and that, once again, nothing which is made by man will be ugly, but will have its due form, and its due ornament, will tell the tale of its making and the tale of its use, even where it tells no other tale. And this because when people once more take pleasure in their work, when the pleasure rises to a certain point, the expression of it will become irresistible, and that expression of pleasure is art, whatever form it may take. As to that form, do not let us trouble ourselves about it; remembering that after all the earliest art which we have record of is still art to us; that Homer is no more out of date than Browning; that the most scientifically-minded of people (I had almost said the most utilitarian), the ancient Greeks, are still thought to have produced good artists; that the most superstitious epoch of the world, the Middle Ages, produced the freest art; though there is reason enough for that if I had time to go into it.

For in fact, considering the relation of the modern world to art, our business is now, and for long will be, not so much attempting to produce definite art, as rather clearing the ground to give art its opportunity. We have been such slaves to the modern practice of the unlimited manufacture of makeshifts for real wares, that we run a serious risk of destroying the very material of art; of making it necessary that men, in order to have any

artistic perception, should be born blind, and ♣ should get their ideas of beauty from the hearsay of books. This degradation is surely the first thing which we should deal with ; and certainly Socialists must deal with it at the first opportunity ; they at least must see, however much others may shut their eyes : for they cannot help reflecting that to condemn a vast population to live in South Lancashire while art and education are being furthered in decent places, is like feasting within earshot of a patient on the rack.

HAND AND
BRAIN



ANYHOW, the first step toward the fresh new-birth of art must interfere with the privilege of private persons to destroy the beauty of the earth for their private advantage, and thereby to rob the community. The day when some company of enemies of the community are forbidden, for example, to turn the fields of Kent into another collection of cinder heaps in order that they may extract wealth, unearned by them, from a mass of half-paid labourers ; the day when some hitherto all powerful " pig-skin stuffed with money " is told that he shall not pull down some ancient building in order that he may force his fellow citizens to pay him additional rack-rent for land which is not his (save as the newly acquired watch of the highwayman is)—that day will be the beginning of the fresh new-birth of art in modern times.

But that day will also be one of the memorable days of Socialism ; for this very privilege, which is but the privilege of the robber by force of arms, is just the thing which it is the aim and end of our present organisation to uphold ; and all the for-

**HAND AND
BRAIN**

midable executive at the back of it, army, police,
law courts, presided over by the judge as representing the executive, is directed towards this one end—to take care that the richest shall rule, and shall have full licence to injure the commonwealth to the full extent of his riches.

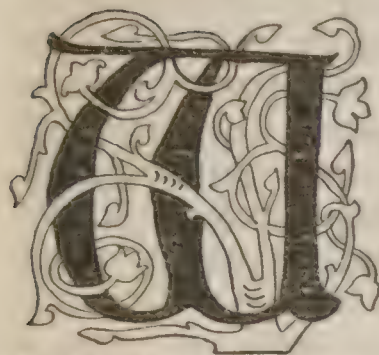


RE-OCCUPATION OF THE LAND

RE-OCCUPATION OF THE LAND.


By ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE.

HAND AND
BRAIN



WE ARE now approaching the end of a century which has far surpassed all preceding centuries in the increase of man's power over natural forces, and consequent enormous increase in the production of wealth. The amount of this increase may be judged from the fact that, fifteen years ago, the amount of actual steam-power in Great Britain was about ten times the labour-power of the whole working population. It is now certainly much greater, and by the use of labour-saving machinery, this amount of mechanical power is again increased probably ten-fold in efficiency, so that our people now perform a hundred times as much productive work as during the preceding centuries when steam power and machinery were hardly used at all. Yet with this hundredfold-capacity for producing the food, clothing, and other commodities needed for the satisfaction of all the wants of human nature and the comforts and enjoyments of life, what do we find? Huge masses of people suffering untold misery and want in all our great cities, and in country villages surrounded by game preserves and untilled fields; an increasing number dying of actual starvation; insanity and suicide increasing more rapidly than the population; and according to a very competent authority, a Prison Chaplain, who has studied the statistics of crime for thirty years, an

HAND AND BRAIN

equally large increase in crime and in the prison population 


As confirming and illustrating all these terrible facts, we have the Yearly Reports of the Registrar General, showing that for the last forty years there has been a continuous increase in the proportion of deaths occurring in workhouses, hospitals, asylums, and other public charitable institutions, from 16 per cent. of the total deaths (in London) in the five years, 1856-60, to 26 per cent. in 1886-90; and a similar increase, though not quite so rapid, is shown for the whole kingdom.

Co-incident with all these facts, and to some extent explaining them, is the continual depopulation of the rural districts and increase of town and city populations, certainly largely due, and I believe wholly so, to the monopoly of land in the hands of the landlord class, which has always forbidden and still forbids the free use of their native soil on fair terms to the workers. Hence has arisen the phenomenon of an ever-increasing lack of permanent employment; the flocking of large numbers of rural labourers and their families to the towns; the increase of poverty, starvation, suicide, insanity and crime; millions of acres of land going out of cultivation, and the cry of agricultural depression, now raised and more loudly because the pockets of the landlords themselves are affected by it. Most of the aspects of the "problem of poverty" above adverted to I have dealt with more or less fully elsewhere, as have many well-known Socialist writers. My present object is to suggest an immediate practical remedy for some of the worst features of the present state of things,

by with-drawing from the labour-market the superabundant workers and rendering them wholly self-supporting on the land. This once effected, every other worker in the kingdom will be benefitted, and the movement for a greatly-improved organisation of society will be advanced by a practical illustration of the enormous waste involved in the capitalistic and competitive system that now prevails.

The problem of general unemployment is well stated by Mr. J. A. Hobson in the "Contemporary Review" of April, 1896 ("Is Poverty Diminishing?"). He says: "Why is it that, with a wheat-growing area so huge and so productive that in good years whole crops are left to rot in the ground, thousands of English labourers, millions of Russian peasants, cannot get enough bread to eat? Why is it that with so many cotton mills in Lancashire that they cannot all be kept working for any length of time together, thousands of people in Manchester cannot get a decent shirt to their backs? Why is it that, with a growing glut of mines and miners, myriads of people are shivering for lack of coals?" Now, not one of our authorised teachers of political economy, not one of our most experienced legislators can give any clear answer to these questions, except by vague reference to the immutable laws of supply and demand, and by the altogether false statement that things are not so bad as they were, and that in course of time they will improve of themselves. Mr. H. V. Mills had his attention directed to this subject by an individual instance of the same phenomena. He found in Liverpool, next door to each other, a bak-

er, a shoemaker, and a tailor, all out of work, all wanting the bread, clothes and shoes which they could produce, all willing and anxious to work, and yet all compelled to remain idle and half starving. His book has been before the world several years; it contains a practical and efficient remedy for this state of things; yet no attempt whatever has been made to give his plan a fair trial. Let us therefore see if we can throw a little more light on the problem, and thus help to force it upon the attention of those who have the power, but who believe that nothing can be done.

 HE answer to the question so well put by Mr. Hobbs, and which Mr. Stead, in the "Review of Reviews," considers to be the modern problem of the Sphinx which it needs a modern Œdipus to solve, is nevertheless perfectly easy. To put it in its simplest form it is as follows: Unemployment exists, and must increase, because, under the conditions of modern society, production of every kind is carried on, not at all for the purpose of supplying the wants of the producers, but solely with the object of creating wealth for the capitalist employer. Now, I believe, that this statement contains the absolute root of the whole matter, and indicates the true and only lines of the complete remedy. But to many it will be a hard saying; let us therefore examine it a little in detail.

The capitalist cotton-spinner, cloth or boot-manufacturer, colliery-owner or iron-master, care not the least who buys their goods or who uses them, so long as they can get a good price for them. The cotton, the boots, the coals, or the iron, may

be exported to India or Australia, to America or to Timbuctoo, while millions are insufficiently clad or warmed in the very places where all these things are made. Even the very people who make them may thus suffer, through insufficient wages or irregular employment ; yet the upholders of the present system will not admit that anything is fundamentally wrong. The lowness of wages and irregularity of employment, are, they tell us, due to general causes over which they have no control—such as foreign competition, insufficient markets, etc., which injure the capitalists as well as the workers. The unemployed exist, they say, on account of the improvements in machinery and in mechanical processes in all civilised countries, which economise labour and thus render production cheaper. The surplus labour, therefore, is not wanted ; and that portion of it which cannot be absorbed in administering to the luxury of the rich must be supported by charity, or starve. That is the last word of the capitalists and of the majority of the politicians. But though capitalists and politicians are satisfied to let things go on as they are, with ever increasing wealth and luxury on the one hand, ever increasing misery and discontent on the other, thinking men and women all over the world are not satisfied, and will not be satisfied, without a complete solution of the problem ; which, though they are not yet able to see clearly, they firmly believe can be found.

Governments in modern times have gone on the principle that they have nothing whatever to do with the employment or want of employment of the people,—with high wages or low wages, with

luxury or starvation, except inasmuch as the latter calamity may be prevented by the poor-law guardians. A great change has, however, occurred in the last few years. Both the local and imperial Governments have admitted the principle of a reasonable subsistence-wage, and are acting upon it, in flagrant opposition to the principles of the old political economy. Now, too, I observe, the buying of government stores abroad, because they can be obtained a fraction per cent. cheaper than at home, is being given up, though only three or four years ago the practice was defended as being in accordance with true economical principles, and also because it was the duty of the Government to buy as cheaply as possible in the interest of the taxpayer. I only mention these facts to show that new ideas are permeating modern society, and are compelling Governments, however reluctantly, to act upon them. We may, therefore, hope to compel our rulers to acknowledge that it is their duty also to provide the conditions necessary to enable those who are idle and destitute—from no fault of their own, but solely through the failure of our competitive and monopolist system—to support themselves by their own labour. Hitherto they have told us that it cannot be done, that it would disorganise society, that it would injure other workers. We must, therefore, show them how it can be done, and insist that at all events the experiment shall be tried. I will now give my ideas of how this great result can be brought about, and the reasons which I believe demonstrate that the method will be successful.

Hitherto there has been no organisation of com-

munities or of society at large for purposes of production, except so far as it has arisen incidentally in the interest of the capitalist employers and the monopolist land-owner. The result is the terrible social quagmire in which we now find ourselves. But it is certain that organisation in the interest of the producers, who constitute the bulk of the community, is possible; and as, under existing conditions, the millions who are wholly destitute of land or capital cannot organise themselves, it becomes the duty of the State, by means of the local authorities, to undertake this organisation; and if it is undertaken on the principle that all production is to be, in the first place, for consumption by the producers themselves, and only when the necessary wants of all are satisfied, for exchange in order to procure luxuries, such organisation cannot fail to be a success.

My confidence in its success is founded on three considerations, which I will briefly enumerate. The first is, the enormous productive power of labour when aided by modern labour-saving machinery. Mr. Edward Atkinson, admitted to be the greatest American authority on the statistics of production and commerce, has calculated that two men's labour for a year in the wheat-growing States of America will produce, ready for consumption, 1,000 barrels of flour, barrels included; and this quantity will produce bread for 1,000 persons for a year. Now as we can grow more bushels of wheat an acre than are grown in America, we could also produce the bread for 1,000 persons by the labour of say four or five men, including the baking. Again, he tells us that, with the best ma-

HAND AND BRAIN

chinery, one workman can produce cotton cloth for 250 people, woollen goods for 300, or boots and shoes for 1,000. And as other necessities will require an equally moderate amount of labour, we see how easily a community of workers could produce, at all events all the necessities of life, by the expenditure of but a small portion of their total labour-power ❧❧❧

The next consideration is, that in the Labour Colonies of Holland, the unemployed are so organised as to produce all that they consume, or its value, without the use of any labour-saving machinery. The reason they have none, the director told Mr. Mills, is that it would lead to a difficulty in finding work for the people of the colony, and it would then be less easy to manage them. The difficulty in this case seems to be to provide against the possibility of a too great success !

The third consideration which points to the certainty of success, is, the demonstrable enormous waste of the present capitalistic and competitive system ; and the corresponding enormous economies of a community in which all production ❧ would be carried on primarily for consumption by the producers themselves. This economy will be illustrated as we consider the organisation of such a community.



CAREFUL consideration of the whole problem by experts will determine the minimum size of a colony calculated to ensure the most economical production of all the chief necessities of life. Let us take it at about 5,000 persons, including men, women and children, which is Mr. Mills' estimate. Enough


land will be required to grow all the kinds of produce needed, both vegetable and animal—say two to three thousand acres—and a skilled manager will be engaged to superintend each separate department of industry. Not only will bread, vegetables, fruit, and meat of all kinds be grown on the land, but the whole of the needful manufactures will be carried on, aided by steam, water, or wind power, as may be found most convenient and economical. To provide clothes, tools, furniture, utensils, and conveniences of all kinds for 5,000 people, workshops and factories of suitable dimensions will be provided, and skilled workers in each department will be selected from among the unemployed or partially employed. ❀ A village with separate cottages or lodgings for families and individuals, with central cooking and eating-rooms for all who desire to use them, would form an essential part of the colony. The village would be built on a high yet central position, so that all the sewage could be applied by gravitation to the lower and more distant portions of the land, while all the solid refuse and manurial matter would be applied to the higher portions. Here would be the first great economy, both in wealth and health. Every particle of sewage and refuse would be immediately returned to the land, where, under the beneficent action of the chemistry of nature, it would be again converted into wholesome food and other products ❀


Another economy, of vast amount, but difficult to estimate, would arise from the whole effective population being available to secure the crops when at their maximum productiveness. Who has

HAND AND BRAIN

not seen, during wet seasons, hay lying in the fields week after week till greatly deteriorated or completely spoilt; shocks of wheat sprouting and ruined; fruit rotting on the ground; growing crops choked with weeds,—all involving loss to the amount of many millions annually, and all due to the capitalistic system which has led to the overcrowding of the towns and the depopulation of the rural districts. But this is only a portion of the loss from deficiency of labour at the critical moment. Agricultural chemists know that, even in good seasons, a considerable portion of the nutritious qualities of hay is lost by the cutting of the grass being delayed a few days or weeks, owing to uncertain weather, the pressure of other work, or a deficiency of labour. The critical moment is when the grass is in flower. Every day later it deteriorates; and in our self-supporting colonies the whole population would be available to supply whatever assistance the head farmer required to get the hay made in the best possible condition. A single fine day, utilised, with the aid of machinery and ample labour, would often save hundreds of pounds value to the colony. The same would be the case with wheat and other corn crops, as well as with fruit and vegetables.

In such a colony education could be carried on in a rational manner not possible under the present conditions of society, where the means of industrial training have to be specially provided. Ordinary school work would be at the most three or four hours daily; the remainder of the working day being devoted to various forms of industrial work. Every child would be taught to help in the

simpler agricultural processes, as weeding, fruit gathering, etc.; and besides this each person would learn at least two trades or occupations, more or less contrasted; one being light and sedentary, the other more active and laborious, and involving more or less out-door work. By this means not only would a pleasant and healthful variety of occupation be rendered possible for each worker, but the community would derive the benefit of being able to concentrate a large amount of skilled labour on any pressing work, such as buildings or machinery 

But perhaps the greatest economy of all would arise from such a community being almost wholly free from costs of transit, profits of the middleman, and need for advertising. The total amount of this kind of waste, on the present system, is something appalling, and can be best realised by considering the difference between the cost of manufacture and the retail price of a few typical articles. Wheat is now about 22s. to 24s. a quarter, which quantity yields nearly six hundred pounds of bread. In our proposed community the labour of making the flour would be repaid by the value of the pollard and bran, while the bread-making would employ two or three men and women. The actual cost of their four-pound loaf, reckoning the labourers to receive present wages, would be  about 2d., while it now costs 3 1-2d. or 4d.—a saving of at least 40 or 50 per cent. Again, the best Cork butter sells wholesale at 8d. a pound, the actual maker probably getting no more than 7d., while the retail consumer has to pay double—here would be a saving of at least 50 per cent. Milk is

HAND AND BRAIN

sold wholesale by the farmers at about 7d. a gallon, while it is retailed at 16d. a gallon—a saving of more than 60 per cent. In meat there would be, probably, about the same saving as in bread; in vegetables and fruit very much more; in coals bought wholesale from the pit, as compared with the rate at which it is sold by the hundredweight or pennyworth to the poor in great cities, an equally large saving. And in addition to all this there would be the economy in cooking for a large community; in the freshness and good quality of all food and manufactured products; and further, in the saving of labour by all those improvements in gas and water supply, in disposing of refuse, in warming and ventilation, which can be easily provided for a large community living in a compact and well arranged set of buildings.

TAKING all these various economies into consideration, it is probably far below the mark to say that our present system of production on a huge scale for the benefit of capitalists and landlords only, on the average doubles the cost of everything to the consumer; that is to say, the cost of distribution is equal to, and often much greater than, the cost of production. And this is said to be an economical system! A system too perfect, and almost too sacred to be touched by the sacreligious hands of the reformer! We are to go on forever spending a pound to get every pound's worth of goods from the producer to the consumer; just as under our Poor Law system it costs a shilling to give a starving man a shilling's worth of food and lodging.

But there is yet another economy, which I have

not hitherto mentioned, and which may perhaps be said to be far greater in real value and importance than all the rest, and that is the economy to the actual producer, of time, of labour, of health, and the large increase in his means of recreation and happiness. Agricultural labourers now often have to walk two or three miles to their work; mill-hands, including women and children, walk long distances in all weathers to be at the mill-gates by six in the morning; workers by the million undergo a process of slow but certain destruction in unsanitary workshops, or in dangerous or unhealthy occupations, many of which (as making the enamelled iron advertising plates, for example) are quite unnecessary for the needs of a properly organised community; while in all cases it is only a question of expense to save the workers from any injury to health. In our self-supporting communities all these sources of waste and misery would be avoided. All work would be near at hand. No work permanently injurious to health would be permitted; while the alternations of outdoor and indoor work, together with the fact that every worker would be working for himself, for his family, and for a community, of which he formed an integral part on an equality with all his fellow-workers, would give a new interest to labour similar to that which every gardener feels in growing vegetables for his own table, and every mechanic in fitting up some useful article in his own house. Then again, while living in and surrounded by the country and enjoying all the advantages and pleasures of country life, a community of five thousand persons would possess in

HAND AND BRAIN


HAND AND BRAIN


themselves the means of supplying most of the relaxations and enjoyments of the town, such as music, theatricals, clubs, reading-rooms, and every form of healthy social intercourse.

✿ Are all these economies, and all this health and comfort for a large population, of less importance to the nation than increased wealth of one or two capitalists? Must thousands or millions continue to have their lives shortened, and during their short lives have a minimum of the comforts and pleasures of life in order that a few may be inordinately rich? I earnestly call upon all who have the welfare of humanity at heart, to consider at what needless cost to the workers the boasted wealth of the nation is now produced.

This is not the place to go into the minute details of the establishment of such communities, but a few words as to ways and means may be considered necessary ~~~~

It has been estimated that the capital required to buy the land and start such a colony would not exceed two years' poor rates of a Union where there are an equal number of paupers. But there is really no necessity for buying the land. It might be taken where required at a fair valuation and paid for by means of a terminal rental, similar to that by which Irish tenants have been enabled to purchase their farms; but in this case the county would be the purchaser, not an individual, and after the first year, or perhaps two years, this rent-charge would be easily payable by the colony. The capital needed for buildings, machinery, and one year's partial subsistence, should be furnished, half by the County or Union, and half by the Gov-

ernment, free of interest, but to be repaid by installments to commence after, say, five or ten years. It would really be to the advantage of the community at large to give this capital, since it would inevitably lead to the abolition of unemployment and of able-bodied pauperism, and the saving thus effected would more than repay the initial outlay 

In each Colony there would be grown or manufactured a considerable amount of surplus produce, which would be sold in order to purchase food which cannot be produced at home—as tea, coffee, spices, etc., and also such raw materials as iron and coal. The things thus produced for sale would vary according to the facilities for its production and local demand. In some colonies it would be wheat or barley, in others, butter and cheese, in others again, flax, vegetables, fruit, or poultry, in others perhaps, leather or wool  And as all the products of our soil except milk are largely imported, there is ample range for producing articles for sale which would not in any way affect prices or interfere with outside labour.

At first, of course, such colonies must be organised and all the work done under general regulations and the same discipline as is maintained in any farm or factory, but with no unnecessary interference with liberty out of working hours. Accounts would be strictly kept and audited, and all profits would go to increasing the comfort of the colonists in various ways, and in paying surplus wages to be spent, or saved, as the individual pleased. Under reasonable restrictions as to notice every one would be at liberty to quit the colony ;

HAND AND BRAIN

but with such favourable conditions of life as would prevail there it is probable that only a small proportion would do so. None, apparently, quit the Dutch colony of Frederiksoord.

But as time went on, and a generation of workers grew up in the colony itself, a system of self-government might be established ; and for this purpose I think Mr. Bellamy's method the only one likely to be a permanent success. It rests on the principle that, in an industrial community, those only are fit to be rulers who have for many years formed integral parts of it, who have passed through its various grades as workers or overseers, and who have thus acquired an intimate practical acquaintance with its needs, its capacities, and its possibilities of improvement. Persons who had themselves enjoyed the advantages of the system, and who had suffered from whatever injudicious restrictions or want of organisation had prevailed, and who had nearly reached the age of retirement from the more laborious work, would be free from petty jealousies of their fellow workers, and would have no objects to aim at except the continued success of the colony and the happiness of all its inmates. On this principle those who had worked in the colony for at least fifteen or twenty years, and who had reached some grade above that of simple workmen, should form the governing body, appointing the superintendents of the various departments, and making such general regulations as were needed to ensure the prosperity of the community and the happiness of all its members

NOW, I would ask, what valid reason can be given against trying this great experiment in every county in Great Britain and Ireland, so as at once to absorb the larger part of the unemployed as well as all paupers who are not past work? The only real objection, from the capitalist's point of view, that I can imagine, is, that colonies in which the whole of the produce went to the workers themselves, including of course their own sick and aged, would be so attractive that they would draw to them large numbers of workers of all kinds, and thus interfere with the capitalists' labour supply. This, I believe, would, after a few years, inevitably occur; but, from my point of view, and from that probably of most workers, that circumstance would afford the greatest argument in favour of the scheme. For it would show that, with a proper organisation of labour, capitalist production was unnecessary; it would afford practical proof that labourers can successfully produce without the intervention of capitalist employers; and if they can do so it will hardly be contended that unemployment and pauperism must be maintained for the benefit of capitalists.

✠ In this connection I will quote a passage from the writings of that remarkable observer and thinker, the late Richard Jeffrey. He says:—

“I verily believe that the earth in one year can produce enough food to last for thirty. Why then have we not enough? Why do people die of starvation, or lead a miserable existence on the verge of it? Why have millions upon millions to toil from morning till evening just to gain a mere crust

HAND AND of bread? Because of the absolute lack of organ-
BRAIN isation by which such labour should produce its effects, the absolute lack of distribution, the absolute lack even of the very idea that such things are possible. Nay, even to mention such things, to say that they are possible, is criminal with many. Madness could hardly go further."

This was written a good many years ago. Now, we who hold such opinions are considered to be, not criminals, but merely cranks; and it is even allowed that we have good ideas sometimes, if only we were more practical. But surely nothing can be more practical than the proposal made here, since the experiment has already been tried in Holland, and has succeeded. To produce any real effect, however, it must be brought into operation on a large scale, and this can only be done by the local authorities, to whom must be given all necessary powers, with the needful financial assistance from the Government.

So soon as labour-colonies of the kind here suggested have been established for a few years, it is quite certain that the District Councils will no longer endure the old, bad, wasteful, and degrading system of the Union Workhouses, but will obtain land, in the vicinity of existing workhouses where possible, and establish labour-colonies of the same type. The effects of the new system will soon become palpable to every householder in the kingdom, in enormously decreased poor-rates, and the almost complete absence of the unemployed. Public opinion will then be all in favour of the new system, and legislation will be demanded and quickly obtained, enabling any number of persons,

who wish to form such a community by voluntary association, to have the land required in any part of the county on a permanent tenure, and at a fair agricultural rental ❧❧❧

HAND AND BRAIN

Numerous self-supporting co-operative labour-colonies being thus established all over the country, their connection by lines of tramways, where required, and the arrangements they would soon make for mutual assistance and exchange of commodities, for the common use of mills or of costly machinery, together with the healthy rivalry that would inevitably spring up, would still further increase the advantages to be derived from them. And these advantages would extend to every ❧ member of the community. For not only would the withdrawal of the whole surplus labour now represented by the unemployed or partially unemployed, inevitably cause a large rise in the rate of wages in all departments of industry ; but the high standard of living, and the freedom from the anxiety now inseparable from capitalistic wage-labour would draw more and more of the workers to such communities, and thus compel capitalists to offer higher and higher wages, in order to obtain the services of the workers. This would result in the capitalist manufacturer being content with an amount of profit sufficient to repay him for his work as organiser and superintendent, as the only alternative to the loss of his fixed capital ❧ The whole net profits of every industrial enterprise would then be distributed as wages to the various classes of workers, and Labour would, for the first time, receive its full and fair reward.



SOCIALISM AND LITERATURE



SOCIALISM AND LITERATURE.

By HENRY S. SALT.

HAND AND
BRAIN



THE supposed incompatibility of Socialism and Literature is one of those gloomy prognostications which sometimes afflict the spirits of literary men. And it must be frankly admitted that, if there should prove to be any natural an-

tagonism between the two, their collision would indeed be "very awkward" (to repeat George Stephenson's historic saying) for literature, since socialism is a moral and economic force which, once started, is not in the least likely to be deflected from its career. There is, however, good reason to believe that these anxieties are superfluous : the spread of socialistic principles does not imply the corresponding triumph of vandalism over culture, but rather the reverse ; and an estimate of the probable effects of socialism on literature may tend to reassure those who see in the coming nationalisation of letters a still more disquieting phenomenon than the nationalisation of machinery and land.

Slowly, but surely, the new ideal of co-operation is forcing itself more and more on the minds of thoughtful men, and irrevocably displacing the old superannuated formula of internecine competition ; already it begins to be apparent that Socialism—the administration of the State in the interests of the whole, and not a part, of its citizens—is not only ethically just but economically inevitable. Accordingly, we see that a *sauf qui peut* is set-

HAND AND BRAIN

ting in among those very powers whose authority was most confidently invoked against the revolutionary gospel ; for Science, after blustering awhile, is prudently disposed to take up a " scientific frontier " which shall freely admit of future convenient readjustments ; while Religion has bethought itself of the very timely consideration that the welfare of the masses is precisely the question which the Churches have most at heart. And what of Literature ? It is full time that it, too, should begin to form some clear conception of the part it is prepared to play in the great struggle, and of the position it will hereafter fill. Let us assume, then, that Socialism, in some form or other, is ultimately certain to be realised : to discuss the various forms is beside our present purpose, the one essential feature of any socialistic regime being that every citizen would, as a matter of course, be assured of a competent livelihood, while none would be able to inherit or amass any nucleus of inordinate wealth. In a State where riches and poverty were alike unknown, where private simplicity went hand-in-hand with public munificence, where the very notion of self-aggrandisement at the expense of one's fellows was held in utter detestation—what, in such a State, would be the probable condition of literature ?

It is noticeable that in the history of every nation a certain stage of artificial society—the stage which sees the accumulation of big fortunes on one side and the pinch of extreme poverty on the other—is accompanied by a corresponding outburst of the *cacoethes scribendi*, the " itch for authorship," which is the bane for all true literary feeling.

This evil manifests itself in two different directions. First, we have the well-to-do, dilettante authors, who, being blessed with an "independence," to-wit, the privilege of living in absolute dependence on the labour of others, are able to indulge their private whims at the expense of the community by writing books which are not wanted, and setting other people to print, publish, distribute, review, and in some cases actually to read them. Secondly, there is the not less mischievous, though personally far less contemptible, class of needy, struggling writers, who have taken to the literary profession, as one might take to a pedlar's or costermonger's business, for the cogent reason that in the break-neck competition of modern society it chanced to offer itself as the readiest means of earning a precarious living. Like the unhappy vendors of boot-laces, matches, and other sweated goods, who importune unwilling purchasers along the pavements of our chief thoroughfares, so do these impecunious scribblers, the guttermen of literature, flood the market with more or less worthless productions, and vie with their wealthier fellow-penmen in swelling the annual bulk of that vast national refuse-heap which is the receptacle for the ceaseless emptyings of our literary dustbins. ❧ The inevitable result of this double process is the grievous degradation of literature. The vast majority of both classes—of the rich men who live to write, and the poor men who write to live—have no natural capacity for the work they have undertaken; there is no distinction or individuality about them which can be held to justify their choice; they are the mere blacklegs of the profes-

HAND AND BRAIN

sion, without purpose and without self-respect, who debate the standard of literary workmanship, and spoil the market for those craftsmen who have the true artistic gift. For of course it is not to be denied, but rather to be welcomed as a matter for sincerest rejoicing, that there are many such real workers, albeit a small proportion of the entire number, who, in spite of the discouragements of the existing system, do produce good results; though it is important to note that these are usually the men who are not only writers, but have some other and more vital interest in the realities of life. At any rate, it is certain that where there is true individuality, where an author has positively something to say and a distinct faculty for saying it, things are at present so arranged as to put him entirely at a disadvantage; he finds himself everywhere jostled and hampered by a crowd of self-seeking adventurers, while the venerable Bumble, who holds the power of the purse, is not usually observed to lend a favourable ear to the promulgators of new opinions. All which things being considered, it is not surprising that a deep pessimism, which is not less unmistakable because it is often veiled in the guise of persiflage, has settled down on our literature ❧

What then would Socialism do to remedy these evils? To take only that one essential condition of any conceivable socialist State—the certainty that every citizen, man or woman, would be provided with the means of earning a sufficient and honourable livelihood—can it be doubted that this alone would revolutionise the profession of letters? For consider briefly what it implies. While all neces-


sary writing work, journalistic, clerical, official, and the like, would be organised and paid on the same scale as any other, there would be an end to the existence of a self-appointed literary class, except possibly where the possession of real talent gave promise of public utility. Henceforth there would be no idle rich gentlemen, who, for sheer lack of anything better to do, would cumber the world with translations from Horace or Heine, or dissertations on art, or volumes of travels, or (that last indignity) their own "reminiscences." There would be no poverty-stricken quill-drivers, compelled, in defiance of the inward monitor and the public neglect, to "dree their weird" to the bitter end, and write the more because they write in vain. Incalculable would be the benefit of the mere lessening of the number of published books, and a fair field would thus be opened for those authors who are attracted to writing by a natural and spontaneous aptitude. It was long ago discovered by the poet Ovid that the best remedy for blighted love is regular occupation, and it may safely be surmised that the blighted litterateur would be directed, in a socialist community, to find comfort in the same infallible prescription. The "itch for authorship" would not survive the establishment of a system where everyone could put his hand, and indeed would be compelled to put his hand, to some wholesome and productive employment; and together with the *cacoethes scribendi* would vanish, we may reasonably hope, that prevalent habit of morbid introspection and that tone of cultured cynicism which have so largely paralysed the literary strength of the present generation.

HAND AND BRAIN

In the prophetic sketch which has been given of the organised society of the future by the author of "Looking Backward," it is observable that a successful writer is permitted to support himself by pen alone, and to claim immunity from the ordinary work which the State requires of its citizens; but Mr. Bellamy, as if conscious that he is here on perilous ground, is careful to add that the popular judgment, by which success is conferred, would be far less partial and erratic than that of nineteenth-century readers, so that the literary class thus established would be at once a smaller and more efficient one. There is little to be gained by speculating on the minor details of the Socialism of a century hence, which, whatever it may prove to be, will not be the tyranny that its opponents anticipate; but, according to Mr. Bellamy, it may be hoped that in a socialised community there will be no authors, successful or the contrary, who would desire to be put on a different footing to their fellows. For literature (here I refer to belles lettres and the ornamental departments of writing) is not, and never can be, "work" in the ordinary sense of the term, nor can it be made a fair equivalent for such work; and though it may be desirable in special cases, and for stated periods, that certain students should be exempt from other duties, it will be found that in the mass, and in the long run, literature itself degenerates when its professors avail themselves permanently of any such immunity. ❧ "Can there be any greater reproach," says Thoreau, "than an idle learning? Learn to split wood at least. Steady labour with the hands, which engrosses the attention also, is

unquestionably the best method of removing palaver and sentimentality out of one's style, both of speaking and writing."


HAND AND
BRAIN

TILL more difficult would it be, let us hope, for a special class of professional critics to exist under a socialist regime; it is hardly conceivable that such a class would care to exist in a society where any amount of healthy, useful work was to be had for the asking. To reapply Tennyson's words :

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out
of the foam,

That the smooth-faced, snub-nosed rogue would leap from his
counter and till,

And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yard-
wand, home.

That there will be an abundance of free and fearless criticism when every work can be judged on its own merits, and there are no "prudential considerations" to make cowards of us all, is not to be doubted; but it seems improbable in the highest degree that individual men of letters will then be so infatuated as to suppose that their personal judgment can be worth giving to the world, systematically and periodically, on any and every literary topic 


But here it will be objected that "pure literature," being the very flower and consummate expression of thought, must not be thus lightly subjected to the risks consequent on a rough equalisation of civic duties, but must rather be fostered and safeguarded with all possible care; the condition of the people is no doubt the most momentous subject for politician and sociologist, but the interests of "pure literature" are of a still higher and more

HAND AND BRAIN

lasting importance. To which it may fairly be answered that to neglect the material well-being of society, out of a sentimental reverence for an art which is ultimately dependent on that well-being, is to repeat the error of the old woman in the fable, who killed the goose that laid the golden eggs. Pure literature, invaluable treasure though it is, becomes a mockery and a sham, if once men recognise that it is the voice of class supremacy and not of a nation's life, even as at the present time we are more and more recognising that much of our so-called "culture" is based on a hideous substructure of degradation and suffering. A refinement which can ignore the misery around it, or even batten on that misery, is no refinement at all. Our literæ humaniores are not humane, and not being humane they are soon found to be illiterate; so that there is real truth in the caustic remark of the satirist Peacock, that "Great indeed must be the zeal for improvement, which an academical education cannot extinguish." Learned professors and busy scientists may shut their eyes to the facts which have made Socialism a necessity, and may elect to play the part of accomplished ostriches in a barren literary wilderness; but the facts are none the less obvious to those who face them. If literature in the future is to be something more than a sickly hothouse exotic, it must draw its sustenance from the subsoil of a just and humanely organised community--which is Socialism. ♣ Equally striking is the contrast between the actual and the possible state of letters when regarded from a purely economic standpoint ♣ At present there is an immense competitive system

of production for private interests; books are largely written, printed and published, not because a profit is expected to result from them, which profit usually goes to parties whose share in the work is not literary but commercial. In each grade of the process the same sordid conditions are observable. The publisher too often sweats the author; the author sweats the copyist or literary hack; the printer sweats the printer's devil: then, in many cases, a false market is manufactured by log-rolling, puffing advertisements, and the various devices of the middleman—and lo! another worthless book has been foisted on the reading public, who, in the confusion thus generated, are naturally rendered more and more incapable of forming a sound and reliable judgment. Thus it is that the whole canon of taste is in great measure distorted, and productions of monumental dullness are artificially exalted into "standard works." ❧ "It is among the standing hypocrisies of the world," says De Quincey, in reference to an instance of the kind, "that most people affect a reverence for this book, which nobody reads."

It is pitiable to think of the amount of human labour, mental and physical, that is thus wasted in the production of worthless volumes. An author who has no manner of business to be an author at all writes, let us say, a bad novel, and forthwith gives employment (perhaps with a proud consciousness of stimulating trade) to a number of persons, publishers, printers, reviewers, and others, who, like himself, would be quite capable, in a rationally ordered society, of performing some useful part. Under a socialist system all this would

be amended, there would be no unworthy inducements to do bad work in one direction when one could do good work in another, and private extravagance would give way to considerations of public economy. Editions de luxe would no longer be issued to mark the crowning degradation of letters ; for who would care to waste his substance upon nonsense bound in vellum, when he could buy good literature in cheap and serviceable form ? And, finally, the State, which at present spends so much on military armaments that it is compelled to plead its poverty whenever literature asks for a share, would be able, out of its abundant treasury, to endow a handsome library in every town and village, and to do more for the encouragement of national culture in a single year than can be done in half a century of our haphazard, suicidal individualism 

From whatever point of view one looks at this question, it is difficult to resist the conviction that the true lover of literature has nothing to fear, but, on the contrary, everything to hope from Socialism. The author of " Looking Backward " is of opinion that the adoption of a socialist system would be followed by a revival of letters even greater than the Renaissance—" an era of mechanical invention, scientific discovery, art, musical and literary productiveness, to which no previous age of the world offers anything comparable." Whether this be probable or not, we may at least feel assured that it will be an age of genuine, and not artificially stimulated, production ; that there will be an immense improvement in the quality of the books produced, in proportion to their quantity ;

that there will be no Grubstreet to send out bad work on the one side, and no Belgravia on the other ; and that the whole of our literature will be informed by a hopeful and helpful spirit of belief in human comradeship, in place of the present pessimistic tone of cynical dilettantism.



OR is there any reason to doubt, in view of the impending social struggle, that the sympathies of the literary class, even as now constituted, will be in the main with the workers ; for, as has been well remarked, " literary men in all ages have been the organs of the *sapientia volgare* or general sentiment of the people." The literary man is the client of Dives, and an excessive consideration for his patron's susceptibilities, and sometimes for his own comfort, has enfeebled the vigour of his thought and dulled the incisiveness of his pen ; but he, too, has not seldom known what it is to suffer, and his heart has all along been with his brother Lazarus at the gate ❀ It is now over a century since literature emancipated itself from the thralldom of the individual aristocrat—is it not time that it were also rid of the plutocratic ascendancy ? ❀ Socialism, while removing the *raison d'être* for a special class of authors, will simultaneously remove the cause of their economic subservience ; they will doff their livery as a sect to find their true distinction as a power. Is not this a benefit which should conciliate the literary man ? Or is he so enamoured of the present state of his profession as to be inflexibly bent on the perpetuation of the same system for his successors, like Sydney Smith's country gentleman, who, having wasted his own youth in

HAND AND
BRAIN

fruitless classical instruction, is resolved that he shall not be the last of a long line of victims?—"Aye, aye, it's all mighty well—but I went through this myself, and I am determined my children shall do the same." ❧❧❧

Unless the signs of the times are wholly deceptive, literature, like every other expression of thought, is now approaching a new and critical phase of its development. The existing forms of literary workmanship have been carried, in the hands of a few great masters, to the ne plus ultra of technical excellence, and it seems improbable that any further progress will be made on the old lines: a fresh impetus is needed, and this can only be supplied by a new ideal. Whence will this new ideal be forthcoming? ❧ Assuredly not from that withered, wrinkled, unlovely creed of pitiless competition which has long made a national literature as impossible as a national art. Not from that so-called "individualism" which has stultified itself by banishing true individuality from the monotonous death-in-life of the masses. Not from that precious "freedom of contract" which is so mysteriously allied with the worst form of class-slavery. Not from the "gentility" which abnegates gentleness; nor the "independence" which lives on sweated labour; nor the "respectability" which is everywhere ceasing to be respected; nor the beauty-worship which ignores the hideous moral deformities of modern life. There is but one source from which there is the slightest possibility of the new ideal uprising, and that is the growing sense of the universal brotherhood and equality of man. This equality, I need scarcely state, is not the

uppish, priggish attempt to be level with one's intellectual superiors, which is periodically deprecated by certain learned professors, who are so steeped in the atmosphere of competition that even their concept of equality is tinged by it ; but simply the recognition of the fact that all human beings hold their lives by the same tenure, and that no individual can find true happiness who in his inmost heart can conceive of himself as better or more deserving than the meanest of his fellows.

♣ If anything can put new life into the culture which at present faints and flags under its half-consciousness of the inhuman and sordid conditions of its social environment, it will be this ideal of equality. The literature that will result from the cheering sense of the world-wide solidarity and fellowship will be tenfold saner than that which is now supported (I will not say inspired) by the craving for personal distinction or the necessity of somehow earning a living among a host of hungry competitors ; furthermore, it will be based on the rock of actuality and self-knowledge, instead of on the shifting sands of a fastidious and sentimental "refinement." ♣ Concurrently with this progress, the general conception of the duties and privileges of authorship will be ennobled and elevated. "The Idea of the Author," said Fitch, "is almost unknown in our age, and something most unworthy usurps its name. This is the peculiar disgrace of the age—the true source of all its other scientific evils. The inglorious has become glorious, and is encouraged, honoured, and rewarded. According to the almost universally re-

HAND AND
BRAIN

HAND AND BRAIN

ceived opinion, it is a merit and an honour for a man to have printed something, merely because he has printed it, and without any regard to what it is which he has printed and what may be its result. They, too, lay claim to the highest rank in the republic of letters who announce the fact that somebody has printed something, and what that something is; or, as the phrase goes, who review the work of others. It is almost inexplicable how such an absurd opinion could have arisen." The literature of the socialised community of the future will surpass that of the present era of unlimited competition by so much as union is stronger than discord, love nobler than hate, and the natural sense of perfect equality with one's fellows a truer and more vital wisdom than the academic culture of oneself.



NATURAL INEQUALITY

NATURAL INEQUALITY.

By GRANT ALLEN.

HAND AND
BRAIN



ALL men are by nature born free and unequal. Socialism is an endeavour to preserve and make the best of this natural inequality ☞

I begin with these obvious though neglected truths, because it is common to hear people who know

nothing about the aims or methods of Socialism assert that "Socialists want to drag us all down to one dull dead level." No more grotesque misrepresentation of the Socialist ideal could possibly be made; yet it has been made so often that most unenquiring minds have come to look upon it as an acknowledged fact. You have only to tell a lie often enough and loud enough for the world to accept it as a familiar truth ☞

In reality, the actual aim of Socialism in this respect cannot be better summed up than in a beautiful phrase of Ruskin's: "No equality, but a frank recognition of every betterness we can find."

Our existing social system—often ridiculously described as individualist (which is just what it is not)—goes upon the exact opposite tack. It endeavours to set up an artificial inequality among those who are really and naturally equal; to introduce an artificial equality among those who are really and naturally unequal; to oppose the recognition of every real betterness; to elevate the lower at the expense of the higher. Socialism, we may be sure, will undo all that ☞ It will aim at keeping mediocre intelligences and mediocre moral

HAND AND BRAIN

natures in mediocre places ; it will strive to prevent little men from masquerading as big ones : but, on the other hand, it will give exceptional abilities and exceptional moral character fair chances of developing themselves freely ; it will allow big men to show their natural bigness, unshadowed by the artificial inflation of little ones.

A historical parallel may help my meaning. If you look at an Egyptian bas-relief, you will often see a representation of a number of small men on a field of battle, all scurrying and running away from a monstrous chariot, drawn by two horses, and containing a comparatively gigantic man, about five times as big as the pygmies he is engaged in chasing. The gigantic man is the Great King ; the little creatures before him are his enemies ; while other equally little men who accompany and assist him are his faithful subjects. Now, were the kings of Egypt really bigger by several sizes than other Egyptians ? Certainly not ; that is just the artist's naïf way of impressing upon you the greatness of the Great King, making you feel the profound distinction supposed to exist between him and mere ordinary humanity. It is a purely artificial and conventional greatness, covering an actual equality or inferiority in stature. Great kings are physically no bigger than other men ; Louis Quatorze, the Grand Monarque, was even exceptionally small, and so was a man of greater mental power, though morally no doubt as inferior, Napoleon.

I often think these Egyptian bas-reliefs make an excellent illustration of the so-called individualist regime about us. We, too, live in a world which

strenuously pretends that some men of five-feet-six are ten feet high, and often that men of six feet are five-feet-six. One can imagine a bold innovator, disgusted with this absurdity, trying to introduce portraits into Egyptian art. "What!" cry the scandalised courtiers, "would you reduce all mankind to one dull dead level? ♣ Would you ruin the variety and diversity of art? Would you paint or carve the Great King himself as no bigger than any ordinary priest or scribe or servant?" "No," the artist answers, "I would not reduce humanity to one dead level. It is you who do that; for you paint all men, except the Great King, of exactly the same size: though some are tall and some are short, some are fat and some are thin, yet for you they are all represented alike by a single canon. What I propose to do is the exact opposite of that: I would paint everybody of his own real size, and with an accurate representation of his own real features. The Great King is four inches shorter, I observe, than his chief minister; and I would represent him accordingly. The chief butler is fat; the chief baker thin; and I would paint them as I find them. Rameses is taller and fairer than Sethi, and taller and fairer he shall be in my picture. No equality but a frank recognition of every difference we can find." ♣ And I know that when our artist had spoken thus, a chorus of horror would go up from the scandalised courtiers to the ears of the Great King, "This man is a leveller; he wants to reduce us all to one dull dead level." ♣ Our existing system, in like manner, takes little men and elevates them to positions of artificial superiority, not on account of any merit of their

HAND AND BRAIN




own, but simply and solely because they are the sons of their fathers, or because they have inherited wealth created by others, or because they have tabooed to themselves the land and mines that are common property, or because, taking advantage of bad social arrangements, they have juggled into their own hands railways, or stocks and shares, or gas, or electricity, or the water supply of great cities. On the other hand, which is even worse, it takes great men—men born naturally great and unequal—men with exceptional abilities for serving the public—great thinkers, great men of science, great artists, great inventors, great captains of industry, great creators of beautiful works in prose or verse, in form or colour—whom it artificially dwarfs and restricts—throws obstacles in their way—prevents them from realising their own full powers—prevents the community from getting the good it might otherwise get out of their exceptional abilities. The false inequality of artifice thus militates against the recognition and public utilisation of the true inequality of nature, and so deprives us of the advantage we might gain by a proper recognition of every real betterness.

I consider this second disadvantage still graver in the long run for the progress of humanity than even the more obvious injustice of letting little men carry off an unfairly large share of the earth's produce. Of course, that in itself is a gross injustice ; but it is an injustice which everybody with a rudimentary moral sense can at once appreciate. Any man with any natural power of ethical reasoning must see at a glance that it is wrong for one person, no better nor wiser nor abler than the

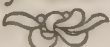
rest, to be entrusted with square miles of land to do as he will with, while other men, just as good or bad, just as clever or silly, are compelled to go without one paltry acre of our mother soil. Any man, with this modicum of ethical sense, can see that it is wrong for one person to usurp the produce of many men's labour, not because he has any just right or claim to it, but simply because bad social arrangements have made it possible for him to filch it from them, leaving the actual producers a bare subsistence, or even, in extreme cases (as in old age or famine) handing them over to actual starvation. It is obvious on the face of it that what no man made or helped to make, is common property of the human race; while what any man made or helped to make, is in so far and proportionately the property of the makers. And since land was made by none, it is clear that land can belong to none; while, since most other products are made by the common labour of us all, from material derived from the common stock of land, it is clear that most other products are the common property of all of us together.

These, I say, are elementary ethical truths, which anybody can grasp at once, unless he be either hopelessly stupid or hopelessly blinded by prejudice. And in the latter case, I would add parenthetically, he probably does grasp them, though he pretends otherwise for his own advantage. But the converse aspect of the question is not so clear to everybody; and I shall therefore proceed to show how much harm is done by our present artificial dead-level system, in refusing to recognise real betterness, and in putting in their place man-

HAND AND BRAIN

made inequalities  In a well-organised world, it is obvious that the community would wish to make the best use for itself of every natural diversity and inequality. Some men are taller than others; it would strive to utilise the tallest men (other things equal) on work where their exceptional stature would enable them to do things which smaller men could only do with greater difficulty. Some men are stronger than others; it would strive to utilise the strongest men (with the same proviso) on work where exceptional strength would produce exceptional results for the common benefit. Some men have great and conspicuous organising abilities; these it would obviously utilise as organisers. Some men have inventive faculty; to these it would give every possible facility for the exercise or development of their inventive powers. Some men can create beautiful objects of art, beautiful works of literature; these it would employ as painters and sculptors, as poets and romance-writers. Some men have a natural taste for investigating and illustrating the laws of nature, which may ultimately subserve human needs and human industries; these it would specialise on the abstract work of discovery, or the concrete and constructive work of invention, in accordance with the natural bent of their faculty  It would frankly recognise every real betterness, so as to give such betterness a fair chance of doing its best work, physical or mental, for the benefit of humanity 

In place of this ideal, what does the existing system do for us? Does it frankly recognise every real betterness? Not a bit of it. It sets up medi-

ocrities in artificial high places, and allows them to swamp and drown and crush out and eclipse all forms of real excellence. Let us begin at the artificial top—or near it. Look at our English peerage. What is that institution but the setting up of a group of mediocrities in the place which ought to be occupied by moral worth, high character, exceptional intelligence, rare legislative faculty? The peers, for example, have each a substantive vote, which they can exercise as a veto against the popular will, in about the proportion of one peer to seventy thousand other citizens. Does anybody really believe that a peer is seventy thousand ~~as~~ times as wise, as learned, as able, as moral, as most other people—any more than he believes that Rameses and Amenhotep were four times as tall as ordinary Egyptians? Does anybody really believe that one Duke outweighs in worth a town of 70,000 inhabitants? Does anybody really believe that, in spite of the strenuous prayers of the ~~the~~ Church, as weekly offered, the lords are really endowed with supernatural “grace, wisdom, and understanding?” Is it not matter of common notoriety that as a mass they are dull and commonplace men, of low moral status, and of vulgar ideals? They are given their great position by the mere accident of birth, or by the chance accession of wealth; they represent either the descendants of former successful land-grabbers, or else the modern bankers, brewers, and stock-exchange speculators. Nobody alleges for them any real betterness. They are there in virtue of money, and money only 

Now, the system of which this is a sample is the

HAND AND BRAIN

same throughout ; and it re-acts in a thousand evil ways upon the national standards and the national conscience. These peers, put by a false method in a false position, do infinite indirect harm to the morals, the intellect, and the advance of the community. I am not thinking here of those piquant "aristocratic scandals" in the matters of sex-relation which certain newspapers serve up to their readers with spicy condiments. Those, it seems to me, are relatively unimportant. It is true, the aristocratic class are as a rule selfish and barbaric in their treatment of women, and particularly of women whom they consider (by another artificial inequality) "beneath them." But that is a small matter, and perhaps on the whole, by keeping alive the discussion of sex-question, the laxity of the "upper classes" has its counterbalancing advantages. I am rather thinking here of far deeper and more all-pervading moral results of the false standard of nobility. The existence of a peerage, and the servile worship of its rank, its wealth, its titles, its appanages, give rise to our national vice of snobbishness, which means the admiration of worthless things in the place of worthy ones. To have a fine house, to drive a carriage and pair, to paint armorial bearings on all his belongings, to see his men servants dressed in livery, if possible, to attain at last to a knighthood, perhaps even a baronetcy, or, oh, wild dream, a peerage itself! these are the ideals which the base-minded man of our existing world sets most before himself. He does not aim at the worthy things of life : at knowledge, at culture, at artistic sensibility, at moral endeavour, at the prize of high citizenship ; he

grasps instead at these vulgar ends, and most of his fellow-citizens admire instead of despise him for so grasping. Our artificial inequality thus acts as a national snare, by setting up false ideals, which vulgar minds too readily follow, and which are antagonistic to the higher ideals of distributive justice and honest citizenship. Such men are striving, not to obtain the reasonable reward of their own exertions, but to monopolise for purposes of vulgar ostentation the products of the labour of hundreds of others, their equals or superiors, whom they have reduced to an artificial inferiority beneath them ~~~

THE inequalities thus multiplied shut the door on every side to the recognition and utilisation of positive good. The nobodies usurp, in the public eye, the place which should of right belong to the somebodies. Men who have it in them efficiently and ably to serve the public, are prevented or retarded by the interposition of the artificial superiorities. It is only by long and close watching of life that one realises the magnitude of this national misfortune. I could multiply endless instances. I content myself with a few. Look at the lives of our truly great men—our thinkers, our organisers, our men of science, our discoverers, our inventors, our poets, our men of letters, our artists. Is it not a commonplace that the majorities of these have had to pass through a period of early struggle which killed some of them, crippled others, soured not a few, drove mad or disheartened or permanently weakened many? Is it not a well-known fact that numbers of them died poor or starving, or gave up the

HAND AND BRAIN


struggle in disgust, or lived on, mere wrecks, or took refuge in suicide? Can this be called "frank recognition of every betterness?" And was not frank recognition delayed or refused largely because the public was already taken up with admiring and chronicling the doings of titled or wealthy nobodies? ❀ Does not our society occupy itself mainly with the men of wealth, of rank, of position, taking little heed to seek out the struggling inventor, artist, poet, naturalist, philosopher, discoverer, who is worth to humanity ten thousand times as much as these ostensible figure-heads? And would not all that be gotten rid of if only we could clear the ground for the recognition of real betterment by abolishing the distinctions we now confer upon mediocrities and inferiorities?

Look at it from another point of view. We have great schools and universities. Do the ablest and most educable boys and men of all classes get educated at these? By no means. Far from it ❀ The most important schools—Eton, Harrow, Winchester; the great universities—Oxford and Cambridge—are almost wholly given over to the great families, aristocratic or capitalist; to the sons of peers or landed gentlemen, of bankers, brewers, merchants, manufacturers, to the exclusion of lads of ability and merit from other strata of the population ❀ When these young men have passed through their school or college course, they go to the professions or to general callings. And how do they fare there? Once more the same thing. Are ability and character the sole credentials of success and public usefulness? Not at all. Mediocrities are shoved into posts for which they are unfit,

to do badly what others would do well for the good of the community, on no better ground than because they are the sons, brothers, cousins, or friends of some peer, some landowner, or some wealthy manufacturer. Look at our army and navy for example, useless destructive organizations, to be sure, which no Socialist or Internationalist can regard with anything but disfavour; still, they are there, and they will point my moral at least as well as any other organisation in our ill-ordered commonwealth. Are they mainly officered and ruled by the ablest and most energetic and bravest men, freely selected on a general survey by pure merit from all classes? Not a bit of it. You have only to look through the army-list or the navy-list to see that an immense number of the highest posts are bestowed upon mediocrities who chance to be peers, or the sons, brothers, and cousins of peers; baronets and country gentlemen, or the sons, brothers, and cousins of country gentlemen; and others of that kidney. You will also recognise at every turn the names of well-known brands of beer, stout, whiskey, and gin; of Manchester cotton-lords and City of London bankers; of those whom it was the snobbish fashion of thirty years ago complacently to describe as "merchant princes." These for the most part usurp promotion, to the exclusion of superior ability and character. The false inequality allows the real no fair chance of asserting itself for the public benefit.

It is the same at the bar, in politics, and in the Government service. Look at the number of judges bearing well-known aristocratic or capitalist names. Look at the number of members of Par-

HAND AND BRAIN

liament who are courtesy lords, or elder or younger sons of peers ; who are baronets, country gentlemen, or great bankers or brewers, compared with those few who, like Burns and Mabon and Broadhurst in one direction, like Morley, Asquith, and Lecky in another, owe their position simply and solely to tried abilities. Dozens of mediocrities are there, wholly unfit for the post of legislator, but thrust into the House for no other reason than because the false use of money and rank obscure the real and native betterness of brains and energy and moral character. It is the same with the civil service. We do not choose men to serve the State simply and solely because they are the best men for the place : we send them as ambassadors to Paris, or employ them as Junior Lords of the Admiralty or as Commissioners in Lunacy, because they are peers or relations of peers, capitalists, or relations or toadies of capitalists. Everywhere we allow artificial inequality to reduce real inequality to a dead level of uselessness 

Nor is this all. The constant setting forth of an artificial standard blinds men's eyes to the existence of a real standard. In ten thousand ways, the peer, or the man of wealth, usurps the credit, the honour, the position, which ought to belong to the man of ability, the man of energy, the man of moral worth, the man of high artistic sensibility. I could give a thousand examples, I will limit myself to two. Even in the Royal Society and other scientific institutions, such considerations are unfortunately allowed to obtrude themselves. There is a certain mediocrity, unimpressive but solemn, a third-class sciolist, who happens to be a duke,

and imagines himself to be a man of science. Were he a commoner, sprung from the people, neither his speeches in Parliament nor his crude and jejune attempts at scientific thought would receive anything more than the compassionate smile they merit. But he is a duke ☙ As a consequence, not only are his prosings in the House of the Lords—the prosings of a “superior” doctrinaire third-rate mind—reported in full, but he has even been invited to sit in the presidential chair of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. My other instance is like unto it. There is a certain body called the Society of Authors, which, one might imagine, would rise superior to similar silliness. But this society holds a yearly dinner, an odd thing for such a society to do, but still eminently English, and they put as a rule in the chair—whom? Meredith, Herbert Spencer, Thomas Hardy, William Watson? No, none of these, but a lord, caught at random, who happens to have published a booklet or who has deigned to express an interest in literature! And this among men of letters! If these things are done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? ☙

I have written all this, honestly and frankly, in spite of the knowledge that a certain class of petty critics will say of it at once, “Narrow spitefulness!” Nothing could be less true. Narrow men, born in a community like ours, do not try to expose its weak points; they try to use them merely for their own advantage. Instead of decrying evils, they make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. It does not “pay” in England to be an ardent reformer. It “pays” to conform,

HAND AND BRAIN

to blink, to shut your eyes, to hold your tongue, to make up to the prejudices and preconceptions of the artificially great; to watch closely which way the cat jumps, and which side of one's own bread is buttered. To tilt at windmills, on the contrary, gains you no pence and little honour, save amongst those whose honour counts nought for worldly success and wordly advantage. My one object here has been to look the question fairly and dispassionately in the face, and to ask, "Is this the way in which a nation can get most good for itself out of the natural inequalities which prevail among its members?"

IN A well-organised world, on the other hand, I conceive that the greatest honour and the highest posts would be uniformly reserved for the best and the most competent. At present, it is luck to a large extent that regulates reward. Men who do little or nothing for the public good are nevertheless born Dukes or Marquises, with a vast estate, and a vast place in the consideration of their countrymen. Men who have been more successful than others in brewing beer, or in distilling whiskey; men who have turned out a better lucifer match, or a cheaper soap, or a worse kind of shoddy; men who have successfully adulterated their coffee, or floured their cocoa, who have mixed cotton with wool or oversized calico, who have gambled to the ruin of others on the stock-exchange, who have juggled into their hands mines, or railway shares, or water-works, or telegraph companies—purveyors of falsified goods or robbers of widows and orphans—often secure wealth, honour, and position; in some cases be-

come founders of "noble" families. Moreover, it is a toss-up what result even useful energies will produce for the possessor. The man who invents a new stopper for soda-water bottles, a new tire for bicycle wheels—excellent things in their way—often makes a fortune. So, oftener still does the man who buys the patent from the inventor for next to nothing. ♣ But the thinker who discovers some great truth of nature; the worker who invents some valuable surgical appliance, some new anæsthetic, some scientific instrument, some optical improvement, usually makes next to nothing, and sometimes even loses his all in the attempt to perfect and bring out his discovery. In other words, reward is not proportioned to the true worth of the invention or discovery to mankind at large, but merely to its immediate marketable value. ♣ We may be sure that Socialism would reverse all that. While encouraging to a due extent the invention of safety matches and improved soda-water-bottle corks, it would encourage, at least to an equal extent, new astronomical, physical, biological, and sociological discoveries—new inventions in all the higher walks of life—new poems, new pictures, new ideas, new philosophies. ♣

For we must remember that in their own nature, discoveries of deep-seated laws, such as the law of universal gravitation, the correlation and conservation of energy, the principle of organic evolution, and so forth, are far more important to mankind, even practically, than secondary and so-called practical discoveries or inventions. ♣ They give us an insight into the working of nature which results in the end in a fuller mastery of nature—

HAND AND BRAIN

in numberless inventions and applications of the first importance. It took generations of electrical investigators to lead up to the first practical electrical appliances. And generally speaking it may be said that while one department of science, including physics, mechanics, chemistry, and the like, is often overpaid, from its immediate marketable value, another division of science, including astronomy, biology, sociology, and so forth, is generally underpaid, because it has little immediate marketable value ¶

“But this,” some good, though narrow Socialists will say, “is all pure individualism!” So be it, if you will; but it is also the best Socialism. I have never been one of those who hold that Socialism is opposed to individualism. On the contrary, I believe Socialism will encourage and develop individuality. I am a Socialist just because I am an individualist. Who are even now the best Socialists among us? The least individual? Not a bit of it; the most markedly individualistic and idiosyncratic temperaments in Britain. “The character of the units,” says Herbert Spencer, “determines the character of the aggregate.” As individual Socialists are themselves, so will they build up the Socialist Republic ¶ I hold that one of the great points of Socialism will be this, that while it will seek to redress such natural inequalities as feebleness, ill-health, loss of limb or organ, deficient intellect, or deficient moral sense, it will seek to develop to the utmost all better inequalities, such as conspicuous strength, health, manual dexterity, mental ability, virile or feminine faculty, paternity and maternity, artistic, scientific, or literary abil-


ity, and so forth, and to utilise them to the utmost for the good of the community ♣ In short, while discouraging all false betternesses, it will encourage and make the most of all true ones.

“ But this,” you object once more, “ is to set up one aristocracy in place of another.” Again, so be it! I told you we were no levellers. We want to see real strength, real nobility, real goodness, real character recognised and made much of. We want to see mediocrity treated as mediocrity, given every chance to do its best, but not to oust and swamp real talent or real strength, not to do ill for us what others can do well for us. Even if your misconception were right—if we wanted to put Herbert Spencer in the national palace of Blenheim, and to install Hardy or Burne-Jones at Chatsworth or Knowsley, I do not think that would be nearly as bad a thing as putting mere dukes and earls and cotton-spinners and mine-owners there. But your misconception is not right ♣ Under a socialistic regime, I do not think any citizen would desire to surround himself with selfish, foolish, and anti-social pomp ; I am quite sure that no other citizen would aid and abet him in so doing. For pomp like this can only be maintained by one man arrogating to himself the result of many men’s labour ; which is the very evil socialism is designed to cure. No, we will have no dukes, either of birth or of intellect ; we will have leaders of men who are leaders of men in virtue of their natural born inequality. ♣ Such leaders of men, such thinkers and organisers, together with those who possessed the art and skill to make life lovelier and better worth living, by pictorial or plastic art, by mimetic repre-

HAND AND BRAIN

sentation, by literature and poetry, by music, by personal beauty, would no doubt receive something the same sort of universal veneration which was paid in France to Victor Hugo. They will be loved like good Walt Whitman; honoured like Cimabue; respected like Darwin. Attention will not be diverted from them, as in modern England, on peers and manufacturers; as in modern America, on silver-kings and railroad wreckers. They may even not improbably receive special marks of public favour, officially bestowed upon them. Even nowadays we make successful generals peers and give them pensions; nay, we sometimes dole out a bare subsistence on the civil list to makers of beautiful poetry, or discoverers of great scientific truths. It is not improbable that the Socialist Republic of the future, while disendowing the generals, will honour to some modest and sufficient extent those who produce the products it most values. It certainly will not wish that its poets, its painters, its philosophers, its inventors, shall lack for bread, or find their work disturbed by sordid and squalid difficulties. These difficulties, indeed, will have vanished for all; much more then will they have vanished for the best and greatest.

“Then, after all, you want a dead level!” Oh, if you can see and value no differences in human life save those which consist in great houses, livery servants, horses and carriages, and external splendour, you merely convict yourself of gross and crass materialism. We are not careful to answer you in this matter. There are other things than those, in which we wish for no dead level, but for

constant advance to nobler and ever nobler diversities. The cult of the millionaire is not the one way to avoid a dull and inartistic uniformity 

“ But this is not what we expect from a Socialist advocate. We expect passionate sympathy with the wrongs of hunger, passionate love for the poor and suffering.” Exactly so ; and you will get them in the proper place. I am not writing here on that side of the question. If I wished, I could treat it from that side too, and say some things to startle you. But my object here is merely to answer


this one foolish objection, that Socialism reduces all men to one dead level. I

say on the contrary, in everything

in which superiority is worth

counting, Socialism will

encourage, foster and

increase every 

possible inc-

quality.



THE ILLUSIONS OF SOCIALISM

THE ILLUSIONS OF SOCIALISM

By BERNARD SHAW

HAND AND
BRAIN



DO NOT suppose that I am going to write about the illusions of Socialism with the notion of saving anyone from them. Take from the activity of mankind that part of it which consists in the pursuit of illusions, and you take out the world's mainspring. Do not suppose, either, that the pursuit of illusions is the vain pursuit of nothing: on the contrary, there can no more be an illusion without a reality than a shadow without an object. Only, men are for the most part so constituted that realities repel, and illusions attract them. To take the simple instance much insisted on by Schopenhauer, young men and young women do not attract each other as they really are. The young man will not marry the young woman until he is persuaded that she is an angel, with whom life will be ecstasy; nor will she marry him until she believes him to be a hero. Under the spell of this illusion, they marry in haste; but it does not at all follow that they repent at leisure. If that were so, their married friends would warn them against marriage instead of encouraging them in it; and widows and widowers would not marry again, as they generally do when they can. The pair find one another out, it is true; but if the union is at all a fortunate one, the disillusion consists in the encouraging discovery that one real woman, faults and all, is worth a dozen angels, and similarly, one real man, follies and all, worth

all the heroes ever imagined. Consequently, these two dupes of a ridiculous illusion, instead of finding themselves cheated and disappointed, get more than they bargained for, and breed new generations for the world as well; and that is why they allow their own sons and daughters to pursue the same illusion when their turn comes.

Now, therefore, if I say flatly that Socialism as it appears to ninety-nine out of every hundred of the ardent young Socialists who will read this book, is an illusion, I do not say that there is no reality behind the illusion, nor that the reality will not be much better than the illusion. Only, I do say, very emphatically, that if the Socialist future were presented in its reality to those who are devoting all the energy they have to spare after their day's work, and all the enthusiasm of which they are capable, to "the Cause," many of them would not lift a finger for it, and would even disparage and loathe it as a miserably prosaic "bourgeois" development and extension of the middle class respectability of to-day. ♣ When any part of Socialism presents itself in the raw reality of a concrete proposal, capable of being adopted by a real Government, and carried out by a real Executive, the professed Socialists are the last people in the country who can be depended on to support it. At best, they will disparage it as "a palliative," and assure the public that it will do no good unless the capitalist system is entirely abolished as well. At worst, they will violently denounce it, and brand its advocates as frauds, traitors, and so on. This natural antagonism between the enthusiasts who conceive Socialism and the statesmen who have


to reduce it to legislative and administrative measures, is inevitable, and must be put up with. But it need not be put up with silently. Every man, enthusiast or realist, has more or less power of self-criticism ; and the more he is reasoned with, the more reasonable he is likely to be in his attitude ❧❧❧


And here the clever and attentive reader will say, "Aha ! so you are going to try to reason away my illusions after all ?" Well, no doubt I am ; but there will be enough of them left when I am done to carry on propaganda with ; so do not be alarmed.

❧ First, let me carefully insist on the fact that the cheerful view I have put forward of illusions as useful incentives to men to strive after still better realities, is not true of all illusions. If a man sets his heart on being a millionaire, or a woman on becoming the spouse of Christ, and attaining to eternal beatitude by living a nun and dying a saint, there is not the smallest likelihood that the results will be worth exchanging for the lot of a decent railway porter or factory girl. Similarly, if a Socialist is merely a man crying out for the millenium because he wants unearned happiness for himself and the world, not only will he not get it, but he will be just as dissatisfied with what he will get as with his present condition. There are foolish illusions as well as wise ones ; and a man may be opposed to our existing social system because he is not good enough for it just as easily as because it is not good enough for him.

Illusions are of two kinds, flattering ones and necessary ones. (For that matter, they are of two million kinds ; but I am only concerned here with

HAND AND BRAIN

these two.) Flattering illusions nerve us to strive for things we do not know how to value in their naked reality, and reconcile us to the discomfort of our lot or to inevitable actions which are against our consciences. The enthusiasm of the average Conservative or Liberal for his party and its leader is excited, not by facts, but by the illusion that his leader is a transcendently great statesman, and his party the champion of all the great reforms, and the opponent of all the mischievous innovations and reactions, which have occurred in the political history of the century. When, as a civilised nation, we dispossess and destroy an uncivilised one, a proceeding which, though often quite proper and unavoidable, would be plain robbery and murder between one civilised citizen and another, we invest it with the illusion of military glory, empire, patriotism, the spread of enlightenment, and so on. When a labourer boasts of being a free Englishman, and declares that he will not stand any nonsense from the German Emperor, or that he would like to see anyone lay a finger on the English Throne or the English Church, he is reconciling himself to his real slavery by the illusion of "Rule Britannia." 

The foolishness of the flattering illusions is the common one by which men conceive themselves as morally superior to those with whom they differ in opinion.  A Socialist who thinks that the opinions of Mr. Gladstone on Socialism are unsound, is within his rights; but a Socialist who thinks that his opinions are virtuous and Mr. Gladstone's vicious, violates the first rule of morals and manners in a Democratic country: namely,

that you must not treat your political opponent as a moral delinquent. Yet this conceited illusion, it appears, is indispensable in political organisation at present. A speech by one of our eminent party leaders usually takes the form of an explosion of virtuous indignation at the proceedings of his opponent ❀ Mr. Chamberlain lectures Sir William Harcourt ; Sir William Harcourt lectures Mr. Balfour ; Mr. Balfour lectures Mr. Morley ; Mr. Morley lectures Lord Salisbury, and so on. The same thing occurs, only more narrowly and virulently, between the Church party and the Non-conformists, and the Protestants and Roman Catholics in Ireland ; whilst the Socialists, I regret to say, usually outdo all the other factions in their habitual assumption that their opponents—typified as “ the capitalist ”—are robbers, rogues, liars, and hypocrites, without a redeeming trait in their characters. Labour is commonly described by them as crucified between two thieves, a fancy picture which implies, not only the villainy of the landlord and capitalist, but the martyred sinlessness of the Socialist, who is represented (by himself) as standing to his opponents in the relation of good to evil. Now, this is an exceedingly flattering illusion. Unfortunately, it is a necessary illusion too, and therefore cannot be exercised by a mere genteel deprecation of its uncharitableness, folly, and bad manners ❀❀❀

What, then, is a necessary illusion ? It is the guise in which reality must be presented before it can rouse a man's interest, or hold his attention, or even be consciously apprehended by him at all. The ordinary man can be depended on to like and

HAND AND BRAIN


dislike, to admire and despise, to court life and shun death ; and these impulses of his will set him thinking and working to benefit and to injure, to give and to grab, to create and destroy, to produce and consume, to maintain and demolish, with sufficient energy and interest to produce civilisation as we now have it. But if you present some problem to him which appeals to none of his passions—say a purely mathematical one—you will find great difficulty in making him understand it. He is not sufficiently interested in it to make the effort, even when he has been forced for years to acquire some practice and skill in such efforts as a school-boy and university graduate. He only devotes himself to dispassionate thought under the compulsion of having to earn his livelihood, and then only when his training, his circumstances, and his capacity make daily work at science or philosophy less irksome to him, on the whole, than business or manual labour. Take an average skipper for example. He will master just as much science as is necessary to qualify him to obtain the indispensable Board of Trade certificates in scientific navigation. But ask him to take a gratuitous interest in science, like that of Galileo or Newton, and you will ask in vain. Mathematics, economics, physics, metaphysics, and so forth, are to him what he calls “dry subjects,” which means, practically, that he will not study them unless he is paid, and not then even, if he can get his living in any more congenial way. But he will, without any payment or external compulsion, buy and read story books or sermons, and go to the theatre or to religious services at his own expense. He is easily, willingly, pleausurably sus-

ceptible to art and religion, which appeal either to his passions and emotions, or to his direct physical sense of beauty of form, sound or colour ; but to science he is refractory and reluctant.



SCIENCE, accordingly, never appeals successfully to the people without disguising itself. It must either bribe them by promising to increase their wealth, prolong their lives, and cure their diseases without interfering with their unhealthy habits ; or else it must excite their romantic love of adventures and marvels by voyages in search of the pole, explorations of hidden continents, or a parade of billions and trillions of miles of interstellar space. Such devices for interesting the public are called "the popularisation of science," and are privately ridiculed by scientific men (exactly as statesmen privately ridicule their own electioneering speeches), who only tolerate them to obtain the recognition and endowments necessary for their work. If Newton were alive now, he would be much less popular as "a man of science" than Mr. Edison, the American inventor ; and even Mr. Edison is not popular as an inventor, but as a magician. But do not, merely for the sake of argument, run away with the idea that the human race is divided into a few scientific Newtons, and Keplers, and Darwins, and a great many wholly unscientific Smiths and Robinsons. Newton's intellect was so powerful that he worked gratuitously at the mathematical theory of fluxions to exercise it, much as a man of great muscular power will work gratuitously at gymnastics and record breaking. But though every man is not a Newton any more than

HAND AND BRAIN

an athletic champion, every man has a certain degree of intellectual power, just as he has a certain degree of muscular power. If his daily work does not use up all his muscular power, he describes his occupation as "sedentary," and works off the surplus by "taking exercise" in the evening. If it does not use up all his mental power, he amuses himself with puzzles, or plays games of skill, or reads treatises 

Now please consider very attentively the fact that the intellect cannot prompt its own actions, any more than the muscles can. When a man kisses a woman, the action is a purely muscular one; yet everyone knows that it never takes place until the man's purpose is formed by his feelings and his imagination. The athlete is not an automatic muscular machine: he is prompted by vanity, pugnacity, emulation, and all sorts of instincts. The same thing is true of intellect. It does not work out fluxions or play chess of its own accord: it must be directed to that particular form of activity by some purpose or fancy in its possessor; and that purpose can only be roused by an appeal to his feelings and imagination. The only initiative power enjoyed by the intellect or the muscles is that of making a man feel restless in mind or body until he has exercised them sufficiently in some way. Hence it used to be said, in the words of a once popular corrupter of children's minds, that

Satan will find mischief still
For idle hands to do.

If this gentleman had believed in his god as devoutly as he believed in his devil, he would not have taught, in the face of the infinite benefits

conferred on him in common with the rest of the world by voluntary work, that mischief comes any more or less naturally to men than suicide does.

♣ Thus we see that though the popularisation of science must be effected by presenting it as a story or drama to the feelings and the imagination, the result of the interest thus aroused will be a certain degree of scientific curiosity about it, especially among people whose daily work consists of some sedentary routine which leaves their minds only half exercised, and does not, like the heavier forms of manual labour, so exhaust the energies of the worker that the least effort to think sends him to sleep at once. Hence we have a popular demand for "scientific explanations."

And here a subtler difficulty, only to be overcome by a fresh illusion, arises. "Explaining a science" means making it intelligible as a subject of thought. Just as the science had to be arranged as a story or drama before the public could be sufficiently interested to think about it, so it now has to be arranged as a logical theory before the human mind, however willing, can grasp it or apprehend it. The human mind is like the human hand in being able to grasp things only when they are shaped in a certain way. Take a plain wooden chair, and ask a man to lift it. He takes it by the back, or by one of the rails or legs, or by the edge of the seat, and lifts it with more or less ease. But ask him to lift it by the center of the seat, and he cannot do it even if he were as strong as Sandow, because he cannot grasp a flat surface. He can only leave it as he finds it, and put it to its proper use by sitting down on it. Now, if instead of asking him to

HAND AND BRAIN

exercise his hands on chairs, you ask him to exercise his brains on subjects of thought, you will find him under just the same necessity to have a handle to his subject, so to speak, before he can apprehend it. And a logical theory, with its assumptions of cause and effect, time and space, and so on, is just such a mental handle and nothing else. Without a theory, natural occurrences may be put to use ; but they cannot be thought out. Men construct windmills and watermills, and grind wheat in them, long before they trouble themselves about the science of winds and currents. When they do, they have to wait until a professional thought-carpenter fits a theory to them. Then everyone can "understand the subject," provided the theory is simple enough. When I was a child I was given this handle to lay hold of the universe by :

God made Man ; and Man made Money.
God made Bees ; and Bees made Honey.
God made Satan ; and Satan made Sin ;
And God made a hole to put Satan in.

That was a somewhat rough handle ; but for many ages it served, as it still serves, great masses of men to arrange the facts of the world in their own heads so that they can think coherently about them. Its absolute, self-evident validity and sufficiency once seemed as plain and certain to very able men as the validity of gravitation or evolution is to very able men at present ; and there is not the smallest reasonable doubt that gravitation and evolution will some day appear quite as crude and childish as the above quatrain appeared to Darwin. We have now before us the conditions upon which

science can be received by the mass of the people at the present stage of human development. If it cannot be forced upon them as the multiplication table is forced on children, or paid for as the ship captain's study of mathematical geography is paid for, it must be dramatized, either in an artistic or a religious form, to rouse popular sympathy and enchain popular attention. And when intellectual curiosity follows sympathy and interest, drama must be followed by theory in order that people may think it as well as feel and imagine it.



NOW it will not be questioned that Socialism, if it is to gain serious attention nowadays, must come into the field as political science and not as sentimental dogma. It is true that it is founded on sentimental dogma, and is quite unmeaning and purposeless apart from it. But so are all modern democratic political systems. The American constitution affirms, quite accurately and inevitably, that every man has a natural right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This is the formal expression of the fact that a democratic political system must start from the assumption of an absolutely dogmatic, unreasonable, unjustifiable, unaccountable, in short, "natural" determination on the part of every citizen to live, do, and say as he pleases, & to use his powers to make himself happy in his own way. Moralizers have proved again and again that life, estimated on a rational basis of a comparison of its pleasures with its pains, anxieties, and labours, is not worth living. High Tories have proved, and can still prove, that slaves purchase freedom at the exorbitant cost of guaranteed sub-

HAND AND BRAIN

sistence, good government, peace, order, and security. Philosophers have warned us that the pursuit of happiness is of all pursuits the most wretched, and that happiness has never yet been found except on the way to some other goal ♣ Every man's reason assents to these propositions; and every man's will utterly ignores them. Mankind is, by definition, unreasonable on these subjects; and we affirm our unreason by claiming what we call natural rights, and agitating for political recognition of these rights as postulates from which all legislation must start, and to the practical satisfaction and enlargement of which it must all be directed. Every political document in which these rights find a fuller and more conscious expression, however ineffectual it may be practically, becomes a historic landmark, as, for example, Magna Charta, the Petition of Rights, the Habeas Corpus Act, and the American Constitution. The final recognition of "natural rights" for every man in the Declaration of Independence, in spite of the practical exclusion of women and blacks from the definition, was the formal inauguration of modern Democracy on its firm dogmatic basis.

But it is one thing to ascertain what you want to secure, and quite another to ascertain the right method of securing it. The American Constitution is often such an exasperating obstruction to the life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness to the American nation, that American reformers long to tear it up; and every gentleman who has been mentally disabled at a University explains that natural rights cannot exist because they are illogical—as if they were not the whole point of them ♣ A

nation making its first attempts to secure its natural rights is like a lady trying to relieve the thirsty discomfort of a very hot day by eating ices. The most obvious steps are not merely ineffectual: they defeat their own object. The early democrats, having become accustomed, under oligarchical or autocratic systems, to associate the denial of their natural rights with governmental action, began by systematically attempting to extend the power of the individual and to curtail that of the State. Hence we get, as the first fruits of Democracy, the triumph of the Whig and his principles of Freedom of Contract, Laissez faire, and so on, with the Manchester School in his van, and the Anarchists as his extreme left wing, just as Cromwell had his left wing of Levellers. But a brief experience of Whig Anarchism, as a safeguard for natural rights, shows that the problem of securing their fullest practicable exercise is much more complicated than it once seemed. It is perceived that just as science throws no light on the dogmatic foundation of Democracy, so the natural right dogmas throw no light on the science of politics. The most immediate and obvious inference from these dogmas have produced a state of things which, at its worst, is a perfect hell of slavery, misery, and destruction of life in the factory and mine, and at its best, though better, on the whole, than anything that has gone before, is out of the question as a permanently satisfactory social adjustment. It has been discovered that the dominant factor in human society is not political organization, but industrial organization; and that to secure to the people control of the political organization, whilst letting the

HAND AND BRAIN

industrial organization slip through their fingers, is to intensify slavery under the political forms & pretensions of freedom and equality. In short, unless the Government controls industry, it is useless for the people to control the Government. When this became plain, the Manchester School was superseded by the Collectivist or Socialist School; and Democracy became Social-Democracy, their objects being the regulation, and finally the proprietorship, organization, and control of industry by the State. Now it is to be observed that we have here no recantation or revision of the dogmas of the American Constitution. Democracy still pursues happiness, and strains after wider life and liberty; and it still disregards the teachings of Asceticism and Pessimism. And Socialism is quite on the side of Democracy—quite agrees that the system it proposes must stand or fall by its success in making the people livelier, freer, and happier than they can be without it. Consequently Socialism is not distinguishable on its dogmatic side from the older-fashioned Democracy, Republicanism, Radicalism or Liberalism, or even from English Conservatism, which no longer pretends to be the organ of a class as against the people, and which is, in fact, more advanced practically than German Social-Democracy. The sole distinction lies in its contention that industrial Collectivism is the true political science of Democracy. The Socialists do not say to the Manchesterists, "Your humanitarian objects are misinterpretations of Man's will," but "Your methods of fulfilling our common object are mistaken, because your social science is er-

roneous. In your induction you have missed the greater part of the facts, because your interest & class prejudices have turned your attention exclusively towards the lesser part. You have relied too much on deduction and too little on historical research and contemporary investigation. You have ludicrously underrated the complexity of the problem to be solved, and have allowed yourselves to be hampered and stopped in your reasoning by old associations of ideas which you have mistaken for principles. To the politicians, as the engineers who must work the political machine, and the artificers who must repair and enlarge it, you have given and are giving bad advice and impracticable directions. We therefore propose to persuade the people to dismiss you and elect us in your place."



THE whole question at issue, then, is one of political science and practice, and of them alone. Just as the introduction of the screw-steamer, or the cutting of the Suez Canal, did not affect the emigrant's desire to go to America or Ceylon, but simply provided him with a better method of getting there, so Socialism does not affect the goal of Democracy, but simply offers a better means of reaching it. There is no disposition to question this—at least verbally—on the Socialist side. Ever since Marx and Engels, in the Communist Manifesto, declared that all other human institutions have been and still are and ever must be only the reflection, in politics, art, religion, and what not, of industrial institutions, we have had the utmost ostentation of the scientific character of Socialism, first as against the Utopian Socialism of Fourier, and more re-

HAND AND BRAIN

cently as against the pure Opportunism of the established political parties. Manchesterism was the first modern political system that came into the field with absolute integrity as an application of pure political and industrial science, and not of supernatural religion or duty. Socialism is equally secular, and more materialistic and fatalistic, because it attributes more importance to circumstances as a factor in personal character and to industrial organization as a factor in society. The data of Collectivism are to be found in Blue Books, statistical abstracts, reports, records and observations of the actual facts and conditions of industrial life, not in dreams, ideals, prophecies & revelations. In theorizing from these data, Socialists have blundered often enough—Marx, for instance, was as faulty in his abstract economics as Adam Smith—but the blunder has never been due to any intentional vitiation of the secularity of the argument by unscientific considerations.

And now, what faces us as the consequence of this scientific character of Socialism? Clearly, it must obey the law to which all science bows when it requires the support of the people. It must be popularized by being first dramatized and then theorized. It must be hidden under a veil of illusions embroidered with promises, and provided with a simple mental handle for the grasp of the common mind. I do not propose to attempt an account of all these illusions and carpenterings: in demonstrating their necessity I have done as much as I can do with profit. What follows is by way of illustration merely.

The dramatic illusion of Socialism is that which

presents the working-class as a virtuous hero and heroine in the toils of a villain called "the capitalist," suffering terribly and struggling nobly, but with a happy ending for them, and a fearful retribution for the villain, in full view before the fall of the curtain on a future of undisturbed bliss. In this drama, the proletarian finds somebody to love, to sympathize with, and to champion, whom he identifies with himself; and somebody to execrate and feel indignantly superior to, whom he can identify with the social tyranny from which he suffers. Socialism is thus presented on the platform exactly as life is presented on the stage of the Adelphi Theatre, quite falsely and conventionally, but in the only way in which the audience can be induced to take an interest in it.

Closely allied to the dramatic illusion, and indeed at bottom the same thing, is the religious illusion. This illusion presents Socialism as consummating itself by a great day of wrath, called "The Revolution," in which capitalism, commercialism, competition, and all the lusts of the Exchange, shall be brought to judgment and cast out, leaving the earth free for the kingdom of heaven on earth, all of which is revealed in an infallible book by a great prophet and leader. In this illusion the capitalist is not a stage villain, but the devil; Socialism is not the happy ending of a drama, but heaven; and Karl Marx's "Das Kapital" is "the Bible of the working-classes." The working-man who has been detached from the Established Church or the Sects by the Secularist propaganda, & who, as an avowed Agnostic or Atheist, strenuously denies or contemptuously ridicules the current be-

HAND AND BRAIN

liefs in heavens and devils and bibles, will, with the greatest relief and avidity, go back to his old habits of thought and imagination when they reappear in this secular form. The Christian who finds the supernatural aspect of his faith slipping away from him, recaptures it in what seems to him a perfectly natural aspect as Christian Socialism ♪

A popular drama must have plenty of sensational incidents—combats, trials, plots, hair-breadth escapes, and so forth. They are copiously supplied by the history of revolutionary Socialism, which has been as romantically told as any history in the world. What incidents are to a drama, persecutions and salvational regenerations are to a religion. Accordingly we have, in the religious illusion of Socialism, a profuse exploitation of the calamities of martyrs exiled, imprisoned, and brought to the scaffold for "The Cause;" and we are told of the personal change, the transfigured, lighted-up face, the sudden accession of self-respect, the joyful self-sacrifice, the new eloquence and earnestness of the young working man who has been rescued from a purposeless, automatic loafing ♣ through life, by the call of the gospel of Socialism.



IN describing the dramatic and the religious illusions separately, I do not lose sight of the fact that most men are subject to both, just as most civilized men go both to the theater and the church, though some go to one and not the other. But, mixed or apart, they are the chief means by which Socialism has laid hold of its disciples. Cruder and narrower dramatic and religious versions of the so-

cial problem still hold the field against them ; but the wider, humaner, more varied and interesting character of the Socialist version, its optimism, its power of bringing happiness and heaven from dreamland and from beyond the clouds down into living, breathing reach, and the power it gains from its contact with and constant reference to contemporary fact and experience, give it an appearance of immense modernity and practicability as compared to the more barbarous and imaginary conceptions which it is superseding. But it is none the less illusory ; and the more the Socialist leaders yield to the temptation to wallow recklessly in the enthusiasm and applause it creates, the more certain they are, when the moment for action arrives, to find themselves thwarted by its wrongheadedness. For when the reality at last comes to the men who have been nursed on dramatizations of it, they do not recognize it. Its prosaic aspect revolts them ; and since it must necessarily come by penurious instalments, each maimed in the inevitable compromise with powerful hostile interests, its advent has neither the splendid magnitude nor the absolute integrity of principle dramatically and religiously necessary to impress them. Hence they either pass it by contemptuously or join the forces of reaction by opposing it vehemently. Worse still, to prevent the recurrence of such scandals, and maintain the purity of their faith, they begin to set up rigid tests of orthodoxy ; to excommunicate the genuinely scientific Socialists ; to entrust the leadership of their organizations to orators and preachers : in short, to develop all the symptoms of what the French

HAND AND BRAIN

call Impossibilism. The first condition of an illusion is, of course, that its victim should mistake it for a reality. The dramatic and religious illusions of Socialism, in their extreme forms, are too gross, too mercilessly and insistently contradicted by experience to impose on a capable man when once he is confronted with practical political work and responsibility. Though very few Socialists gain sufficient practical experience nowadays to be completely cured of Impossibilism, partial cures occur every day. The invaluable habit of mind which we modern Socialists have learnt from our Jevonian economics should therefore save us from the error of regarding Socialists as either out-and-out Possibilists or out-and-out Impossibilists. Neither in Socialism or anything else is it true that whatever is not white is black. Every gradation of credulity, from the crudest dreaming to the most skeptical practicality, is represented in the Socialist movement. In the extreme sections of the Social-Democratic Federation, in the Communist-Anarchist side of the Independent Labour Party, and in the Anarchist groups, the dramatic and religious illusions will be found just as I have described them. At the other extremity you have the typical Fabian, who flatly declares that there will be no revolution ; that there is no class war ; that the wage earners are far more conventional, prejudiced, and " bourgeois " than the middle class ; that there is not a single democratically constituted authority in England, including the House of Commons, that would not be much more progressive if it were not restrained by fear of the popular vote ; that Karl Marx is no more infallible

than Aristotle or Bacon, Ricardo or Buckle, and like them, made mistakes which are now plain to any undergraduate ; that a professed Socialist is neither better nor worse morally than a Liberal or Conservative, nor a working-man than a capitalist ; that the working-man can alter the present system if he chooses, whereas the capitalist cannot because the working-man will not let him ; ~~as~~ that it is perverse stupidity to declare in one breath that the working-classes are starved, degraded, and left in ignorance by a system which heaps victuals, education, and refinement on the capitalist, and to assume in the next that the capitalist is a narrow, sordid scoundrel, and the working-man a high-minded, enlightened, magnanimous philanthropist ; that Socialism will come by prosaic instalments of public regulation and public administration enacted by ordinary parliaments, vestries, municipalities, parish councils, school boards, and the like ; and that not one of these instalments will amount to a revolution, or will occupy a larger place in the political program of its day than a Factory Bill or a County Government Bill now does : all this meaning that the lot of the Socialist is to be one of dogged political drudgery, in conflict, not with the wicked machinations of the capitalist, but with the stupidity, the narrowness, in a word the idiocy (using the word in its precise and original meaning) of all classes, and especially of the class which suffers most by the existing system.

Taking these as the two extremes between which all avowed and conscious Socialists, and a good many unavowed and unconscious ones, are to be

HAND AND BRAIN

found, we see that the scale is apparently one of diminishing illusion. But the real scale is one of acuteness of intellect, political experience, practical capacity, the strength of character which gives a man power to look unpleasant facts in the face, and doubtless also the comfortable circumstances which enable clever professional men, with fair incomes, to be more philosophical than poor and worried ones. That is why a very crude illusion will impose on the men at one end of the scale, whilst it requires a comparatively very subtle one to impose on the men at the other. I remember once, shortly after the great London Dock Strike of 1889, addressing a rather bigoted Socialist audience from the Fabian point of view. One speaker was so strongly possessed by the dramatic illusion, that in criticising the parts played by Mr. John Burns and the late Cardinal Manning in that struggle, he vehemently denounced Mr. Burns, with many sanguinary expletives, as a cowardly trimmer and apostate, because he had not taken the Cardinal by the neck and pitched him into the river. Another speaker, of acuter mind, illustrated the danger of having any dealings with Radicals who were coming round to our opinions, by the analogy of his own experience as a sprint runner, in which he had found, he said, that the man to be feared in the race was not the man farthest behind him, but the one close on his heels. Therefore, he argued, the bigoted Tory was less dangerous to us than the Radical Land Nationalizer. Now if these two Socialists be compared with, say, Shelley and Lassalle, it will not be disputed that they were enormously less capable men. But to say

that the ideals of Shelley and Lassalle, however immeasurably they may have transcended those of the fraternal gentleman who wanted to have the Cardinal pitched into the river, were any less illusory in the forms in which they presented themselves to their consciousness, is more than any wise man will venture to affirm.

My reader must now beware of the illusion that other Socialists do not recognize this scale. On the contrary, all Socialists do; but each considers himself as being at the sensible, hard-headed end of it. And the more completely a Socialist is the dupe of the dramatic and religious illusions in their crudest form, the more positively is he convinced that he is founded on a triple rock of "scientific political economy," history, and social evolution. The way in which a man, out of the abysses of an ignorance of the subject ten times deeper than any ordinary honest unconsciousness of it, will expound to you such blurred notions as he has been able to pick up of "surplus value," over-production, commercial crises, the imminent breakdown of the capitalist system by the laws of its own development, and so on, is quite as funny as the way in which the man who opposes him will retort with scraps from the economic prophets of the Manchester school—supply and demand, the population question, the law of diminishing return, and what not?



AND here we come to the second line of illusion—that which supplies the demand for a theory, not only as a sort of trapeze for the intellect, but as a scientific basis for faith. This demand is now a thoroughly popu-

HAND AND BRAIN

lar one: even the narrowest chapel-goer likes to hear that fossils have been discovered on the tops of mountains (showing that the Deluge is scientifically proved), and that the name of Nebuchadnezzar has been deciphered on Babylonian bricks. But the popularization of genuine scientific theories is becoming daily more impossible among people who have not had an elaborate secondary education—that is, the vast majority of citizens—because the theories, as they are followed up, lose their original crude and simple forms, and become not only complex in themselves, but unintelligible without reference to other theories. For example, the old theory of light, which had the great authority of Newton to recommend it, presented the solar spectrum (popularly, the rainbow) as consisting of three primary colours, with three secondary ones produced by the overlapping and mixing of the primaries. This was a very easy explanation: every child could take his penny paints, red, blue, and yellow, and mix them into purple, green, and orange. But the modern theory of the spectrum which has prevailed since Young's time, is no such simple matter; it cannot be made intelligible to any one who does not know something of the whole theory of light. The result is that to this day the notion of primary and secondary colours remains the popular theory.

Now Socialism, as it happens, has for its economic basis two theories, the theory of Rent and the theory of Value. The first of these seems simple to those who have mastered it; but it is neither obvious nor easy to the average sympathetic man: indeed, men of first-rate ability, among them

Adam Smith, Marx, and Ruskin, have blundered over it, although writers of much less imposing eminence mastered it and formulated it for the instruction of later generations. Nobody, not even Mr. Henry George, has succeeded in popularizing it. The theory of value has a different history. Like the rainbow theory, it began by being simple enough for the most unsophisticated audience, & ended by becoming so subtle that its popularization is out of the question, especially as the old theory is helped by the sentiments of approbation it excites ; whereas the scientific theory is ruthlessly indifferent to the moral sense. The result is that the old theory is the only one available for general use among Socialists. It has accordingly been adopted by them in the form (as far as that form is popularly intelligible) laid down in the first volume of Karl Marx's "Capital." It is erroneous and obsolete ; it has been modified out of existence by Marx himself in his third volume ; it would, if it were valid, disprove the existence of "surplus value" instead of proving it ; it has been used again and again to discredit the economic soundness of Socialism ; but any child can understand its elementary proposition that the value of a commodity is created by the labour put into it, and can be measured, as labour customarily is in the market, by hours and days ; whereas the scientific theory, though based on the sufficiently plain, acceptable fact that things have value because people want them, labour being thus the consequence and not the cause of value, proved so baffling and elusive when the first attempts were made to reduce it to a rule, that until Jevons con-

HAND AND BRAIN

quered it the economists gave it up as unworkable, and boldly treated commodities as possessing two distinct sorts of value—use value and exchange value—which was, of course, absurd. But, absurd as it was, it was the only handle by which men so clever as Adam Smith, Ricardo, De Quincey, John Stuart Mill, and Karl Marx could lay hold of the problem ; and what baffled brains as able and specially trained as theirs, is hardly likely to come easily to amateur Socialist lecturers, much less to their audiences, who generally regard the intelligible theory as favourable to Labour, and the unintelligible one as hostile to it—a mistake, but a very convenient one for the lecturers, since it saves them the necessity of explaining the theory they do not understand, and enables them to ask whether it is likely that Jevons (whose renown is purely academic) was a greater man than the world-renowned Marx, forgetting that a very ordinary person may now be of opinion that the earth is round without necessarily being a greater man than Saint Augustine, who believed it to be flat. However, a Socialist is a Socialist ; and whichever theory he adopts, he arrives at the same conclusion : the advocacy of a transfer of “ the means of production, distribution, and exchange ” from private to collective ownership. If he could be persuaded that the old theory did not support this “ principle,” as he calls it, he would give up the old theory, even if Jevons were still too hard for him. And thereby comes the cherished illusion that all Socialists are agreed in principle though they may differ as to tactics. This is perhaps the most laughable of all the illusions of Socialism, so

outrageously is it contradicted by the facts. It is quite true that the Socialists are in perfect agreement with one another except on those points on which they happen to differ. They can claim that happy understanding not only among themselves, but with the Liberals and Conservatives as well. But the notion that their differences are at present any less fundamental than their agreements is an illusion, as the following examination will show.

✚ With the Socialists who are under the religious illusion in its most Calvinistic mode, the formula about the means of production represents a principle to be carried out to its logical extreme in unbroken integrity—Man, from their point of view, being made for Socialism and not Socialism for Man. The toleration of even such a convenient infraction of the principle as allowing an individual to keep a typewriter or a bicycle for his own exclusive use without some very explicit and constant affirmation of the fact that it was common property, would be resisted by them as determinedly as an old-fashioned New England Methodist resists the introduction of an organ into his meeting house. Other Socialists—the Fabians, for instance—openly and expressly treat the question of private property as one of pure convenience, & declare that as long as the livelihood of the people is made independent of private capital and enterprise, the more private property and individual activity we have the better. Here, clearly, far from the Calvinistic Socialist being agreed with the Fabian Socialist in principle, it is just on the question of principle that they are irreconcilable, though circumstances may at any moment bring them to

HAND AND BRAIN


an agreement as to tactics. I myself am firmly persuaded that Socialism will not prove worth carrying out in its integrity—that long before it has reached every corner of the political and industrial organization, it will have so completely relieved the pressure to which it owes its force that it will recede before the next great movement in social development, leaving relics of untouched Individualist Liberalism in all directions among the relics of feudalism which Liberalism itself has left. I believe that its dissolution of the petty autocracies and oligarchies of private landlordism and capitalism will enormously stimulate genuine individual enterprise instead of suppressing it; and I strongly suspect that Socialist States will connive at highly undemocratic ways of leaving comparatively large resources in the hands of certain persons, who will thereby become obnoxious as a privileged class to the consistent levellers. If I am right, Socialism at its height will be as different from the ideal of the "Anti-State Communists" of the Socialist League of 1885, and of Domela Nieuwenhuis and his Dutch Communist Anarchist comrades to-day, as current Christianity is from the ideal of the apostles and of Tolstoi. This, of course, is not my "principle:" it is my practical view of the situation; but the fact that I do not think it wrong to take that view, and should unhesitatingly vote for a man who took it as against a man who took what I have called the Calvinist view, appears to the Calvinist mind to be conclusive evidence either that I am no Socialist, or else that I am so cynically indifferent to "principle" in the abstract that I cannot properly be said to be any-

thing at all. To settle the matter, let us again apply the Jevonian method. Instead of asking "Are you a Socialist or not?" let us say, "How much are you a Socialist?" or more practically still, "What do you want to Socialize; and how much and when do you propose to Socialize it?" The moment the case is put in this way, all pretence of agreement vanishes. Let me suggest a few detailed questions. Do you advocate the socialization of the cotton industry, of shipbuilding, of railways, of coal mines, of building, of food supply, and of the clothing trades? If so, do you contemplate the socialization of the book industry? and do you, in that case, conceive that the Kelmscott Press and the Doves Bindery would be incorporated with the Stationery Office, with Mr. William Morris and Mr. Cobden Sanderson as salaried officials, under the orders of an Under Secretary and a Cabinet Minister? Do you advocate the socialization of the church, the chapel, the "hall of science," the services of the Ethical Society, and of the Salvation Army? If so, do you advocate the socialization of the theatre and concert room? Do you propose merely to extend State enterprise to industry, or to enforce state monopoly by suppressing all private enterprise in industry? Or would you monopolize in some cases and not in others, according to circumstances? For instance, if you socialized surgery and painting, would you punish a dentist for making a private contract with a citizen to extract his tooth for a guinea, or fine Sir Edward Burne Jones for painting his daughter's portrait out of office hours for nothing?

I might devise a page of such questions; but the

HAND AND BRAIN

above are quite sufficient to divide Socialists into two sections : first, the fanatics who are prepared to sacrifice all considerations of human welfare & convenience sooner than flinch from the rigorous application of " their principles," even to the point of burlesquing their own creed ; and second, the more or less practical men, among whom there would be as much diversity of opinion on each particular point as there is on any ordinary question in the House of Commons. Thus the unity of Socialism, and the existence of definite boundary lines between it and Progressivism, prove to be mere illusions. Notwithstanding which, the battle cry of the Communist Manifesto, " Proletarians from every land, unite ! " still inspires us ; and we gain a foolish but effective courage from the imaginary tread of millions of workers joining the mighty columns of the Revolution.

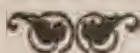
 HE double rampart of illusion is now complete. Socialism wins its disciples by presenting civilization to them as a popular melodrama, or as a Pilgrim's Progress through suffering, trial, and combat against the powers of evil to the bar of poetic justice with paradise beyond ; by holding up its leaders as heroes, prophets, and seers ; and by satisfying the intellectual curiosity and criticism which the picture arouses with a few links of logic held up and jingled as scientific formulæ. It is in such ways that the will of the world accomplishes itself. Out of the illusion of " the abolition of the wage system " we shall get steady wages for everybody, & finally discredit all other sources of income as disreputable. By the illusion of the downfall of Cap-

italism we shall turn whole nations into Joint Stock Companies; and our determination to annihilate the "bourgeoisie" will end in making every workman a "bourgeois gentilhomme." By the illusion of Democracy, or government by everybody, we shall establish the most powerful bureaucracy ever known on the face of the earth, & finally get rid of popular election, trial by jury, and all the other makeshifts of a system in which no man can be trusted with power. By the illusion of scientific materialism we shall make life ~~2~~ more and more the expression of our thought and feeling, and less and less of our craving for more butter on our bread. But in the meantime we shall continue to make fools of ourselves; to make our journals bywords for slander and vituperation in the name of fraternity; to celebrate the advent of universal peace by the most intemperate quarrelling; to pose as uneducated men of the people whilst advancing claims to scientific infallibility which would make Lord Kelvin ridiculous; to denounce the middle class, to which we ourselves mostly belong: in short, to wallow in all the follies and absurdities of public life with the fullest conviction that we have attained a Pisgah region far above such Amalekitish superstitions. No matter: it has to be done in that way, or not at all. Only, please remember, still in the true Jevonian spirit, that the question is not whether illusions are useful or not, but exactly how useful they are. ♣ Up to a certain point, illusion—or, as it is commonly called by Socialists, "enthusiasm"—is, more or less, precious and indispensable; but beyond that point it gives more trouble than it is

HAND AND BRAIN

worth : in Jevonese language, its utility becomes disutility. There are some Socialists who, to put it plainly, are such fools that they do more harm than good, even in the roughest sort of preliminary propaganda. Others, more sensible, do excellent work as preachers and revivalists, but are nuisances when the formal political organization begins. Others, who can get as far as organizing an election without being disqualified by the vehemence of their partisanship, would, if elected themselves, be worse than useless as legislators and administrators. Others are good parliamentary orators and debaters, but bad committee men. As the work requires more and more ability and temper, it requires more and more freedom from the cruder illusions, especially those which dramatize one's opponents as villains and fiends, and more and more of that quality which is the primal republican material—that sense of the sacredness of life which makes a man respect his fellow without regard to his social rank or intellectual class, and recognizes the fool of Scripture only in those persons who refuse to be bound by any relations except the personally luxurious ones of love, admiration, and identity of political opinion and religious creed. Happily none of us is quite without this republican quality ; for it is not a question of having it or not, but of having it more or less (the inevitable Jevons again, you see); and it is certain that unless it is so strong in a man that he is habitually at least a little conscious of it, he is hardly good enough for the world as it is, much less for the Socialist world to come. To such a man alone can Equality have any sense or validity in a

society where men differ from one another through
an enormous compass of personal ability, from the
peasant to the poet and philosopher. Perhaps
to such a one alone will it be plain that a
Socialist may, without offence or ar-
rogance, or the least taint of in-
tentional cynicism, discourse
as freely as I have done
on the illusions of
his own creed.



TRANSITIONS TO FREEDOM

TRANSITIONS TO FREEDOM.

By EDWARD CARPENTER.

HAND AND
BRAIN



AFTER a hundred years since the first French Revolution the problem indicated by the words "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," seems to be shaping up towards something like a possibility of solution. In modern social changes there is a curious new element arising from the fact that political and social science is now so far advanced that though we cannot actually predict we can to some extent (as the foregoing essays show) forecast the future; and it is no longer necessary for us simply to shriek a watchword, and then blunder along helplessly and blindly in some opposite direction. Society can now quite conveniently attend and even assist at its own birth; and we are beginning actually to witness and to aid in the processes by which the free communities of the future are working themselves out.

While the members of the various Socialist bodies differ, as Bernard Shaw says in the preceding chapter, very widely in their views, it seems to me that they agree—or those who think at all about the matter agree—in their general conception of the stages through which modern society is passing. They all agree that we are approaching a Collectivist stage in which industrial arrangements will be largely handled or regulated by governmental agency; and they all agree that beyond that lies a non-governmental (or Anarchist) stage in which authoritative regulation will fall off, leav-

HAND AND BRAIN

ing such arrangements largely to custom & spontaneous initiative. Only they differ immensely in the importance which they attach to these stages and their sub-stages. Says Kropotkin, "No doubt we shall have to pass through a stage of State Collectivism ; but Anarchism is our aim. The former is only a nuisance ; let us hurry past it as fast as we can, holding our noses, so to speak." Says Hyndman, "No doubt, good friends, a free Communism is what Society will come to some day, but it is so remote, you know, so remote ; Collectivism, the nationalisation of the land and all the instruments of production, is the word of the near future—let us concentrate our efforts on that." Says Sidney Webb, "What was that I heard about the land and all the instruments of production? Sounds a large order—suppose we begin by organising a Water supply for London." Like folk on a journey from Manchester to Paris, one man thinks only about Paris, and the happy time he will have when he gets there ; another plans his journey as far as Dover, but leaves his arrangements for crossing the Channel till he sees the sea ; and a third simply gets out his Bradshaw & looks up the next train to London. And it still remains doubtful which man will get to Paris first. So the Anarchists, Social Democrats, Labour parties, Fabians, and Trade Unions are practically to-day along the same line of march ; only they fix their minds on different points on the line ; and even Lord Salisbury, who misses no opportunity of pointing out (and who certainly ought to know) the corruption and imbecility of Governments, might—if he were only consistent, which of course

he is not—fall into the procession too. What I propose to do in this paper is to show that the last stage on the line of march is a possible one to reach, and not after all so remote as some may be inclined to think; and to indicate some of the steps and transitions which are bringing us along a road on which, as I take it, our feet are actually set. The chief difficulty which arises in people's minds at the thought of a free non-governmental society does not concern its desirability—they are agreed as a rule that it would be desirable—but concerns its practicability. And this difficulty is derived from the society of the present. People see in fact that an internecine competition for subsistence is the ruling force of life to-day, and the chief incentive to production, and they infer that without government society would dissolve into a mere chaos of plunder on the one hand, and of laziness on the other. It is this difficulty which has first to be removed.

Though it seems a hard thing to say, the outer life of society to-day is animated first and foremost by Fear. From the wretched wage-slave who rises before the break of day, hurries through squalid streets to the dismal sound of the "hammer," engages for nine, ten or twelve hours, and for a pittance wage, in monotonous work which affords him no interest, no pleasure; who returns home to find his children gone to bed, has his supper, & worn out and weary, soon retires himself, only to rise again in the morning and pursue the same deadly round; and who leads a life thus monotonous, inhuman, and devoid of all dignity and reality, simply because he is hounded to it by the

HAND AND BRAIN

dread of starvation ;—to the big commercial man who, knowing that his wealth has come to him through speculation and the turns and twists of the market, fears that it may at any moment take to itself wings by the same means ; who feels that the more wealth he has, the more ways there are in which he may lose it, the more cares and anxieties belonging to it ; and who to continually make his position secure is, or thinks himself, forced to stoop to all sorts of mean and dirty tricks ;—over the great mass of the people the same demon spreads its dusky wings. Feverish anxiety is the keynote of their lives. There is no room for natural gladness or buoyancy of spirits. You may walk the streets of our great cities, but you will hear no one singing—except for coppers ; hardly a plough-boy to-day whistles in the furrow ; and in almost every factory (this is a fact) if a workman sang at his work he would be “ sacked.” We are like shipwrecked folk clambering up a cliff. The waves are raging below. Each one clings by handhold or foothold where he may, and in the panic if he push his neighbour from a point of vantage, it is to be regretted certainly, but it cannot be helped !

BUT such a state of affairs is not normal. Allowing that competition in some degree must always exist, history still, except at rare crises, presents us with no such spectacle of widespread anxiety ; the study of native races—whom we might consider in a state of destitution—reveals no such dominion of dread. I want the reader to imagine for a moment this burden of fear lifted off the hearts of a whole people ; and the result.

Let us imagine for a moment that some good fairy—some transcendental Chancellor of the Exchequer—with a stroke of his wand, has assured to us all not only an old-age pension, but a decent provision for all our days of the actual necessities of life (to go no further than that); so that for the future no man could feel any serious or grinding anxiety for his own material safety or that of his family. What would be the result on our actions? ♣ Perhaps, as many would maintain, nine-tenths of the population would say, "I'm blessed if I'll ever do another stroke of work." Like the organ-grinder who came into a little fortune, and who forthwith picked up an axe and fell upon his organ, shouting as he hacked it to pieces, "You shall neffer play dat tam 'Alabama Coon' any more"—we should feel so sick of our present jobs that we should want to turn our backs on them for ever. Very likely, I should say—and rightly enough too; for "work" in the present day is done under such degrading and miserable conditions by the vast majority of the population that the very best and most manly thing we could do would be to refuse to continue doing it.

But let us suppose, since a bare living has been assured to us and we are in no danger of actual starvation, that we all take a good long holiday—and abstain religiously from doing anything. Suppose that we simply twirl our thumbs in idleness for two, three, four, or six months. Still, is it not obvious that at the end of that time nine-tenths of the population would find sheer idleness appallingly dreary, and that they would set themselves to work at some thing or other?—to produce ob-

HAND AND BRAIN

jects of use or beauty, either for themselves, or for their families and neighbours, or even conceivably for society at large: that in fact a spontaneous & free production of goods would spring up, followed of course by a spontaneous and free exchange—a self-supporting society based not on individual dread and anxiety, but on the common fullness of life and energy?

That people relieved from care do spontaneously set themselves to work is sufficiently shown by the case of the well-to-do classes to-day. For these people, though having everything provided for them, and not merely the bare necessities which we have supposed, exhibit the most extraordinary and feverish energy in seeking employment. A few decades of years have been quite sufficient to make them feel the utter failure of picnics as an object in life; and now we are flooded with philanthropic and benevolent societies, leagues, charity organisations, art missions to the poor, vigilance crusades, and other activities, which are simply the expression of the natural energies of the human being seeking an outlet in social usefulness. It is of course to be regretted that owing to the very imperfect education of this class, their ideas and their capacities of social usefulness should be so limited. However this is a defect which will no doubt be remedied in the future. All that concerns us here is to see that since the rich, though in many ways ill-adapted by training and circumstance, do spontaneously take up a life of this kind, there is nothing extravagant in supposing that the average man, surrounded by so many unfulfilled needs, might do the same.

And if any one still doubts let him consider the thousands in our large towns to-day who would give their ears to be able to get out and work on the land—not so much from any prospect of making a fortune that way, as from mere love of the life; or who in their spare time cultivate gardens or plots or allotments as a hobby; or the thousands who when the regular day's work is over start some fresh little occupation of their own—some cabinet-making, wood turning, ornamental ironwork or whatnot; the scores of thousands in fact that there are of natural gardeners, cabinet-makers, ironworkers, and so forth; and then think how if they were free these folk would sort themselves spontaneously to the work they delighted in. Thus it appears to be at least conceivable that a people not hounded on by compulsion nor kept in subjection by sheer authority would set itself spontaneously to produce the things which it prized. It does not of course at once follow that the result would be perfect order and harmony. But there are a few considerations in the positive direction which I may introduce here.

In the first place each person would be guided in the selection of his occupation by his own taste and skill, or at any rate would be guided by these to a greater extent than he is to-day; and on the whole would be more likely to find the work for which he was fitted than he is now. The increase in effective output and vitality from this cause alone would be great. While the immense variety of taste and skill in human beings would lead to a corresponding variety of spontaneous products. In the second place the work done would be Use-

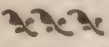
HAND AND BRAIN

ful. It is certain that no man would freely set himself to dig a hole, only to fill it up again—though it is equally certain that a vast amount of the work done to-day is no more useful than that. If a man were a cabinet-maker and made a chest of drawers, either for himself or a neighbour, he would make it so that the drawers would open and shut; but nine-tenths of the chests made on commercial principles are such that the drawers will neither open nor shut. They are not meant to be useful, they are meant to have the semblance of being useful; but they are really made to sell. To sell, and by selling yield a profit. And for that purpose they are better adapted if, appearing useful, they turn out really useless, for then the buyer must come again and so yield another profit to the manufacturer and the merchant. The waste to the community to-day arising from causes of this kind is enormous; but it is of no moment as long as there is profit to a certain class.




WORK in a free society would be done because it was useful. It is curious, when you come to think of it, that there is no other conceivable reason why work should be done. And of course I here include what is beautiful under the term useful—as there is no reason why one should separate what satisfies one human need, like the art-need, from another human need, like the hunger-need. I say the idea of work implies that it is undertaken because the product itself satisfies some human need. But strangely enough in Commerce that is not so. The work is undertaken in order that the product may sell, and so yield a profit; that is all. It is of no

moment what the product is, or whether bad or good, as long as it fulfills this one condition. And so the whole spirit of life and industry in the other society would be so utterly different from that of the present, that it is really difficult for us to compare the results. But it is not difficult to see that if on the principles of freedom there was not so much produced, in mere quantity, and folk did not (as may indeed be hoped) work so many hours a day as now, still, the goods turned out being sincere and genuine, there would really be far more value shown in a year than on the strictly commercial system.

In the third place it follows—as William Morris points out in his foregoing paper, and elsewhere—that “work” in the new sense would be a pleasure—one of the greatest pleasures undoubtedly of life; and this one fact would transform its whole character. We cannot say that now. How many are there who take real pleasure and satisfaction in their daily labour? Are they, in each township, to be counted on the fingers? But what is the good of life if its chief element, and that which must always be its chief element, is odious? No, the only true economy is to arrange so that your daily labour shall be itself a joy. Then, and then only, are you on the safe side of life. And your work being such, its product is sure to become beautiful; that painful distinction between the beautiful and the useful dies out, and everything made is an artistic product. Art becomes conterminous with life 

Thus it will be observed that whereas the present society is founded on a system of Private Prop-

HAND AND BRAIN

erty, in which, almost necessarily, the covetous hard type of man becomes the large proprietor, & supported by law and government, is enabled to prey upon the small one; and whereas the result of this arrangement is a bitter and continuous struggle for possession, in which the motive to activity is mainly Fear; we, on the contrary, are disentangling a conception of a society in which Private Property is supported by no apparatus of armed authority, but as far as it exists is a perfectly spontaneous arrangement, & in which the main motives to activity are neither Fear nor greed of Gain, but rather Community of life and Interest in life—in which in fact you undertake work because you like the work, because you feel that you can do it, and because you know that the product will be useful, either to yourself or to some one else! 

How Utopian it all sounds! How absurdly simple and simple-minded—to work because you like the work and desire the product! How delightful if it could be realised, but of course how “unpractical” and impossible!

Yet is it really impossible? From Solomon to Dr. Watt we have been advised to go to the Ant and the Bee for instruction—and lo! they are unpractical and Utopian too. Can anything be more foolish than the conduct of these little creatures, any one of whom will at any moment face death in defence of his tribe? While the Bee is absolutely so ignorant and senseless that instead of storing up the honey that it has gathered in a little cell of its own, with a nice lock and key, it positively puts it in the common cells and cannot distinguish it


from the stores of the others. Foolish little Bee, the day will surely come when you will bitterly rue your "unthrifty" conduct, and will find yourself starving while your fellow tribesmen are consuming the fruits of your labour.


And the human body itself, that marvellous epitome and mirror of the universe—how about that? Is it not Utopian too? It is composed of a myriad cells, members, organs, compacted into a living unity. A healthy body is the most perfect society conceivable. What does the hand say when a piece of work is demanded of it? Does it bargain first for what reward it is to receive, & refuse to move until it has secured satisfactory terms? or the foot decline to take us on a journey till it knows what special gain is to accrue to it thereby? Not so; but each limb and cell does the work which is before it to do, and (such is the Utopian law) the fact of its doing the work causes the circulation to flow to it, and it is nourished and fed in proportion to its service. And we have to ask whether the same may not be the law of a healthy human society? Whether the fact of a member doing service, however humble, to the community would not be quite sufficient to ensure his provision by the rest with all that he might need? Whether the community would think of allowing such an one to starve any more than a man would think of allowing his least finger to pine away and die? ♣ Whether it is not possible that men would cease to feel any anxiety about the "reward of their labour;" that they would think of their work and the pleasure they had in doing it, first, and would not doubt that the reward would follow?

HAND AND BRAIN

For indeed the instinct to do anything which is obviously before you to do, which is wanted, and which you can do, is very strong in human nature. Even children, those rudimentary savages, are often extremely proud to be "useful"—and it is conceivable that we might be sensible enough, instead of urging them as we do now—to "get on," to make money, to beat their fellows in the race of life, and by climbing on other folk's heads to ultimately reach a position where they would have to work no longer—that we might teach them how when they grew up they would find themselves members of a self-respecting society which, while it provided them gratis with all they might need, would naturally expect them in honour to render some service in return. Even small children could understand that. Is it quite inconceivable that a society of grown men and women might act up to it? 🐼

But it is really absurd to argue about the possibility of these things in human society, when we have so many actual examples of them before our eyes. Herman Melville, in that charming book, "Typee," describes the Marquesas Islanders of the Pacific, among whom he lived for some time during the year 1846. He says, "During the time I lived among the Typees no one was ever put upon his trial for any offence against the public. To all appearances there were no courts of law or equity. There was no municipal force for the purpose of apprehending vagrants or disorderly characters. In short there were no legal provisions whatever for the well-being and conservation of society, the enlightened end of civilised legislation." Neverthe-

less the whole book is a eulogy of the social arrangements he met with, and with almost a fervour of romance in its tone ; and yet, like all his descriptions of the natives of the Pacific Islands, undoubtedly accurate, and well corroborated by the travellers of the period. An easy communism prevailed. When a good haul of fish was made, those who took part in it did not keep the booty to themselves but parcelled it out & sent it throughout the tribe, retaining only their proportionate share. When one family required a new cabin, the others would come and help to build it. He describes such an occasion, when, " at least a hundred of the natives were bringing materials to the ground, some carrying in their hands one or two of the canes which were to form the sides, others slender rods of hibiscus, strung with palmetto leaves, for the roof. Every one contributed something to the work ; and by the united but easy labours of all, the entire work was completed before sunset." 

 Similar communistic habits prevail of course through a vast number of savage tribes, and indeed almost anywhere that the distinctively commercial civilisation has not set its mark. They may be found close at home, as in the little primitive island of St. Kilda in the Hebrides, where exactly the same customs of sharing the hauls of fish or the labours of housebuilding exist to-day, which Melville describes in " Typee ;" and they may be found all along the edges of our civilisation in the harvesting & house-warming " bees " of the backwoods & outlying farm-populations. And we may fairly ask, not whether such social habits are pos-

HAND AND BRAIN

sible, but whether they are not in the end the only possible form ; for surely it is useless and absurd to call these modern hordes of people, struggling with each other for the means of subsistence and jammed down by violent and barbaric penal codes into conditions which enforce the struggle, Societies ; as it would be absurd to call the wretched folk in the Black Hole of Calcutta a society. If any one will only think for a moment of his own inner nature he will see that the only society which would ever really satisfy him would be one in which he was perfectly free, and yet bound by ties of deepest trust to the other members ; and if he will think for another minute he will see that the only condition on which he could be perfectly free (to do as he liked) would be that he should trust and care for his neighbour as well as himself. The conditions are perfectly simple ; & since they have been more or less realised by countless primitive tribes of animals and men, it is surely not impossible for civilised man to realise them. If it be argued (which is perfectly true) that modern societies are so much more complex than the primitive ones, we may reply that if modern man, with his science and his school-boards and his brain cultivated through all these centuries, is not competent to solve a more complex problem than the savage, he had better return to savagery.

But it is getting time to be practical.


Of the possibility of a free communist society there can really, I take it, be no doubt. The question that more definitely presses on us now is one of transition—by what steps shall we, or can we pass to that land of freedom ?

WE HAVE supposed a whole people started on its journey by the lifting off of the burden of Fear and Anxiety; but in the long slow ascent of Evolution no sudden miraculous change can be expected; and for this reason alone it is obvious that we can look for no sudden transformation to the communist form. Peoples that have learnt the lesson of "trade" & competition so thoroughly as the modern nations have—each man fighting for his own hand—must take some time to unlearn it. The Sentiment of the Common Life, so long nipped and blighted, must have leisure to grow and expand again; and we must acknowledge that—in order to foster new ideas and new habits—an intermediate stage of Collectivism will be quite necessary. Formulæ like the "nationalisation of the land and all the instruments of production," though they be vague and indeed impossible of rigorous application, will serve as centres for the growth of the sentiment. The partial application of these formulæ will put folk through a lot of useful drilling in the effort to work together and for common ends.

If I might venture, taking only the agencies which we see already around us at work, to sketch out how possibly the transitions to the free communist state will be effected it would be somewhat as follows: *✍*


In the first place the immense growth of the Unemployed—which is so marked a feature of the day, and which is due to the monopoly of land & machinery in the hands of the few—is going before long to force the hand of government to the development of big industrial schemes, and to the

HAND AND BRAIN


socialisation, in some degree, of land and machinery. While at the same time the rolling up of companies into huge and huger trusts is going to make all such transfers of industry to public control daily more obviously necessary and more easy to effect 

On the other hand the Trade-unions and Co-operative Societies, by rapid development of productive as well as distributive industries, by the interchange of goods with each other on an ever-growing scale, and possibly by the adoption of a currency of their own, will be bringing about a similar result. They will create a society in which enormous wealth will be produced and handled not for the profit of the few but for the use of the many; a voluntary collectivism working within & parallel with the official collectivism of the State.

As this double collectivism grows and spreads, profit-grinding will more and more cease to be a lucrative profession. The spread of employment and the growing security of a good wage, combined with the extraordinary cheapening of production, owing to machinery, etc., which is already taking place, will bring about a kind of general affluence—or at least absence of poverty. The unworthy Fear which haunts the hearts of nine-tenths of the population, the anxiety for the beggarly elements of subsistence, will pass away or fade in the background, and with it the mad nightmarish competition and the bitter struggle of men with each other. Even the sense of Property itself will be alleviated. To-day the institution of Property is like a cast-iron railing against which a human being may be crushed, but which still is re-

tained because it saves us from falling into the gulf. But to-morrow when the gulf of poverty is practically gone, the indicating line between one person and another need run no harsher than an elastic band 

It is this general rise in well-being due to the next few years of collectivist development which will, I believe, play the part of the good fairy in the transformation-scene of modern society. With the dying-out of fear and grinding anxiety and the undoing of the frightful tension which to-day characterises all our lives, Society will spring back nearer to its normal form of mutual help. People will wake up with surprise, and rub their eyes, to find that they are under no necessity of being other than human.


Simultaneously (i. e., with the disappearance of Money as an engine of interest and profit-grinding) the huge nightmare which weighs on us to-day, the monstrous incubus of "business"—with its endless Sisypheus labours, its searchings for markets, its displacement and destruction of rivals, its travellers, its advertisements, its armies of clerks, its banking and broking, its accounts and checking of accounts—will collapse, and roll off like a great burden to the ground. Freed from the great strain and waste which all this system creates, the body politic will recover like a man from a disease, and spring to unexpected powers of health 

Meanwhile in the great industrial associations, governmental and voluntary, folk will have been learning the sentiment of the Common Life—the habit of acting together for common ends, the

HAND AND BRAIN

habit of feeling together for common interests—& once this has been learnt the lesson will follow of its own accord. We need not fear that State-organisation will run to the bitter end so often prophesied—nor is there any danger of poetry and ginger beer being converted into government monopolies. But it may perhaps be hoped that it will go far enough to form the nucleus of immense growths of voluntary Socialism, and to give, as government action does, a very distinct direction to the current of public opinion.

If this seems an odd mixture of Anarchism and State-Socialism, it has to be remembered—and Bernard Shaw has consumed a great many valuable pages of this book in showing it—that there is not the smallest chance of any “ideal,” pure & simple, of society being at any time absolutely realised. Besides, an ideal is at best an awkward thing. For while it is obviously either Smith’s ideal or Brown’s ideal, it is pretty certain that Brown’s ideal would not suit Smith, nor Smith’s ideal suit Brown. So that while we can see plainly enough the communistic direction in which society is trending, we may both hope and fairly expect that the resulting form will not be the exact “ideal” of any labour party; but will be broad enough and large enough to include an immense diversity of institutions and habits as well as a considerable survival of the social forms of to-day.

HE payment of labour by wages for example is not exactly an ideal of the most advanced party, yet it is probably an arrangement that will continue for a long period. It may perhaps be said that in some ways

a generous wage-payment convention (as for instance sketched in the last chapter of Carruther's "Commercial and Communal Economy") on a thoroughly democratic basis, gives more freedom than a formless Anarchism in which each one takes "according to his needs,"—simply because under the first system, A could work two hours a day and live on the wage of two, and B could work eight and live on the wage of eight, each with perfect moral freedom—whereas if there was no wage system, A, however much he might wish to loafe, would feel that he was cheating the community—and the community would think so too—unless he gave his eight hours like everybody else.

The great point however to bear in mind in all this matter is that though the Cash-nexus may & no doubt will linger on for a long time in various forms of Wages, Purchase, Sale, and so forth, it must inevitably with the changing sentiment and conditions of life lose its cast-iron stringent character, and gradually be converted into the elastic cord, which while it may indicate a line of social custom—will yield to pressure when the need arises. Private Property will thus lose its present virulent character, and subside into a matter of mere use or convenience ; monetary reckonings & transfers, as time goes on, will seem little more than formalities—as to-day between friends.

Finally, Custom alone will remain. The subsidence of the Property feeling will mean the subsidence of brute-force Law, for whose existence property is mainly responsible. The peoples accustomed to the varied activities of a complex industrial organism, will still—though relieved from the com-

**HAND AND
BRAIN**

pulsion either of hunger or of brute authority—
continue through custom to carry on those activi-
ties—their Reason in the main approving ❁
Custom will remain—slowly changing.

And the battles of the Heroes of the
future will be individualistic, not
against the armed force of
governments, but against
the apathetic routine
❁ and inertia of
the human
masses.



SO HERE ENDETH HAND & BRAIN: A SYMPOSIUM
OF ESSAYS ON SOCIALISM, PRINTED BY ME,
ELBERT HUBBARD, AT THE ROYCROFT
SHOP THAT IS IN EAST AURORA,
NEW YORK. COMPLETED THIS
FIRST DAY OF SEPTEMBER,
ANNO CHRISTI,
MDCCCXCVIII.





datacolor



HAND AND BRAIN

0 inch

1

2

3

4

5

6

WESTC

15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30